Chronicles

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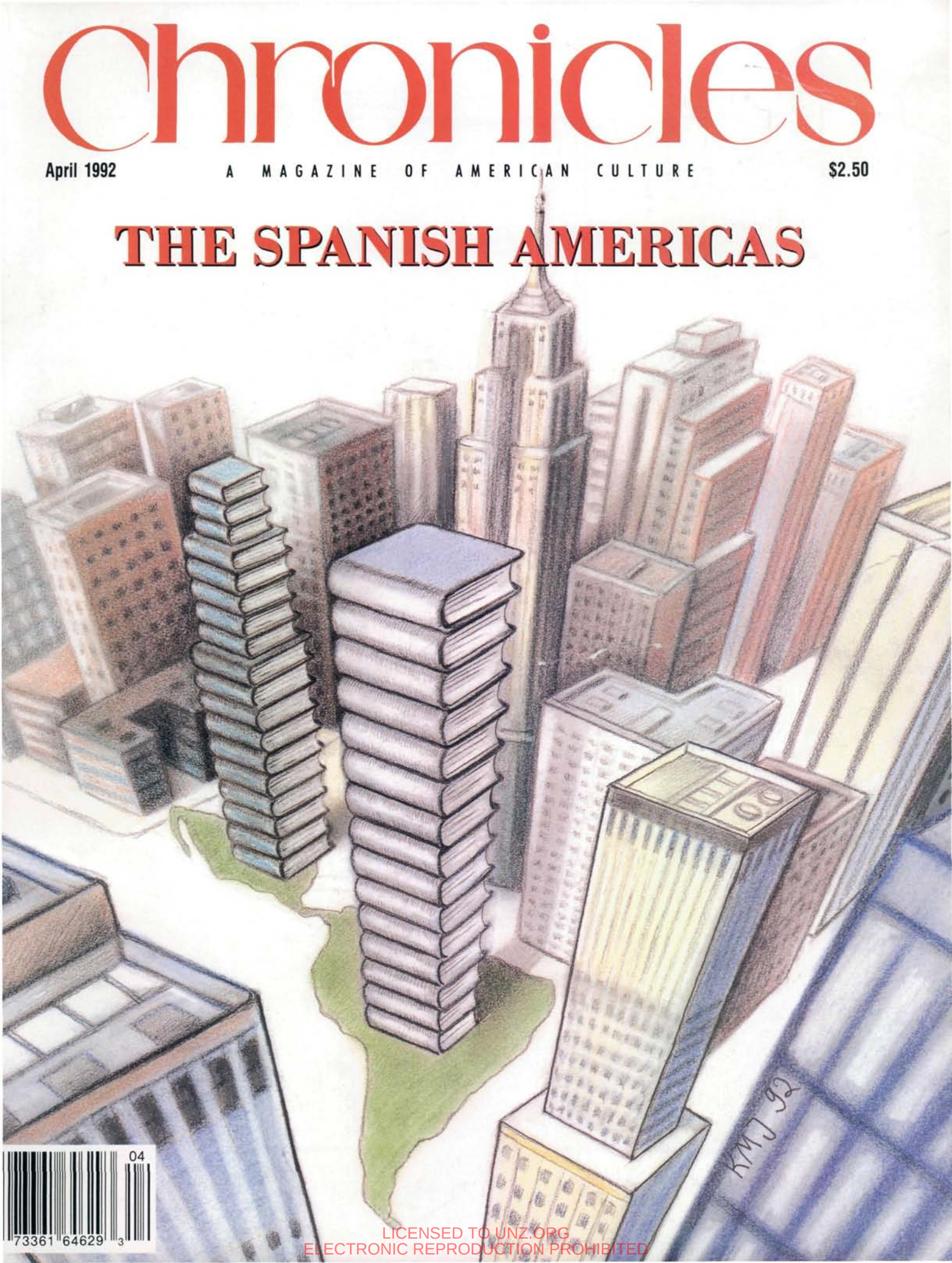

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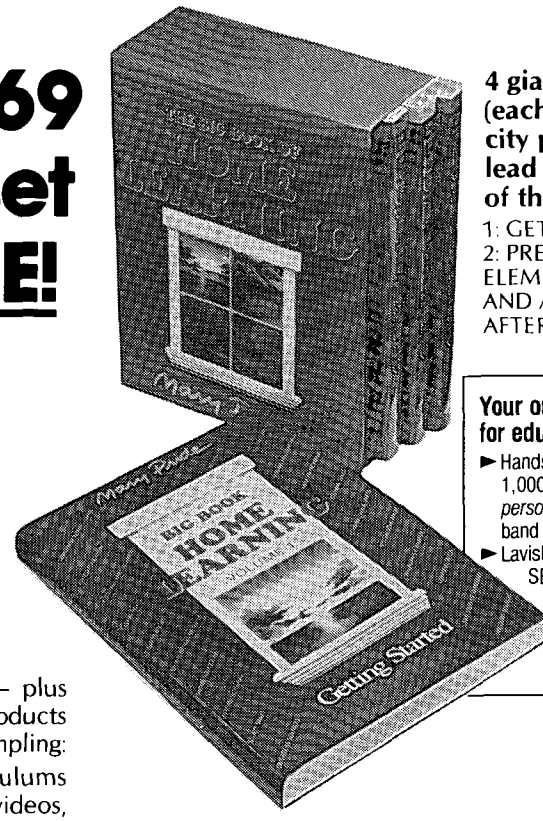

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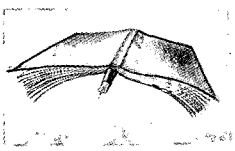
Chronicles
A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE

"Here too the lariat, the Indian, the yearling.
Here too the secretive and unseen bird . . ."
—Jorge Luis Borges

PERSPECTIVE



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Chronicles
A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE

Vol. 16, No. 4 April 1992

On 'Veterans of Future Wars'

E. Christian Kopff's article on the Veterans of Future Wars of the 1930's (December 1991) sounded like something the New Left might have tried had their members been wittier. As a tale of naive and youthful folly it had some merit, but Kopff still takes the notion seriously. That makes the joke a bad one. There is certainly nothing honorable in attempting to reduce the noble feeling of patriotism to mere commerce. It is, however, an old tactic to try to bring down to one's own level opponents who hold the moral high ground by attributing to them base motives. The insult to the millions of servicemen who fought and bled for love of country in World War II seems to escape Kopff even now.

Kopff's history is also flawed. His pat dichotomy between republic and empire, peace and war, in terms of ancient Rome is not valid. Much of the Roman empire was conquered under the republic. Greece and Macedonia were brought under Rome's control over a century before Augustus defeated Anthony. By 100 B.C. the republic's power ran from Asia Minor to North Africa on to Spain and the coast of Gaul. Had the Romans been stay-at-home pacifists no one would have heard of them—except as victims of some other empire.

Thus Kopff's judgment as to what constituted the "true" Roman spirit is open to question. In the mid-second century B.C., there was a growing concern that the ruling class was becoming decadent. Polybius decried "the general deterioration of morals," citing how "some had abandoned themselves to amours with boys, others to prostitutes, and many to musical pleasures and drinking-bouts and extravagant spending on these." He saw two causes for this "debauchery." First, the defeat of Carthage and Macedonia had given the Romans a false sense of security; and second, the wealth that poured in from Greece was making the aristocracy soft. The Senate decayed before it fell.

In contrast, Polybius held up Scipio Aemilianus as one who had "set his heart on a different path in life" and thus "established a universal reputation." Scipio is famous for having destroyed Carthage in 146 B.C. and Numantia in Spain in 133 B.C. His lineage, natural and adoptive, was traced back through the great victories at Pydna, Magnesia, and Zama. Scipio had volunteered to fight in Spain at a time when it was difficult to find members of the aristocracy to serve there. He told the Senate that the war should "summon to Iberia all who have a genuine love of honor." Polybius says that after Scipio's impassioned address "those who had before shrunk from the danger, now, from dislike of the sorry figure they made in comparison to him, began volunteering."

There is the true Roman spirit. Not hiding on country estates or cutting corrupt deals in the capital, but striving manfully towards new frontiers. It carried Rome forward under both the republic and empire to establish a realm that lasted far longer than the United States has—or will, if the isolationists, environmentalists, and other assorted naysayers (both left and right) have their dreary way.

—William R. Hawkins
Knoxville, TN

Dr. Kopff Replies:

Occupied with his classical scholarship, Mr. Hawkins is unaware of the Great Depression. The issue in 1936 was not aiding men or the families of men wounded or killed in World War I, but giving borrowed money to able-bodied men, most of whom had not fought, had not even seen France. They enjoyed the status of "veterans," however, and so had their "rights" to public largess. Our society has been bankrupted by giving borrowed money to those whose status is divorced from creative social function.

Pace Mr. Hawkins. I do not claim to know the "true" Roman spirit, but I consider the opinion of Cremutius Cordus, a Roman senator driven to his death by Tiberius and honored by

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Tacitus, as valid as the anecdotes of a Greek propagandist for foreign imperialism, like Polybius. The campaign Scipio volunteered for ended with the massacre of the Spanish leaders during a truce. That notorious naysayer, Cato the Censor, tried vainly to get the commander in chief, Sulpicius Galba, condemned, and put his speech against Galba into his great *Origins of the Cities of Italy*. Scipio went on to become consul twice. The first time he sacked Carthage and sold all he did not slaughter into slavery; the second time he returned to Spain to do the same to the city of Numantia. In some accounts he gave the Numantines a day to commit suicide before enslaving the survivors. The dreary Cervantes found the Numantines fit topic for a play, and German archeologist Adolf Schulten wrote about them memorably. America tried to live up to the Scipionic example in the Philippines. Cato and William Jennings Bryan felt that free institutions could not survive in such a moral environment. Were they wrong?

And, finally, the sting in the tail: "if the isolationists, environmentalists and other naysayers (both left and right) have their dreary way." Polybius' Greek prose style is dreary. Whatever faults Edward Abbey had in *The Monkey Wrench Gang* or *Desert Solitaire*, he was never dreary. In the last generation of the American republic, opponents of interventionism included Charles Austin Beard and H.L. Mencken, Sinclair Lewis and Frank Lloyd Wright, Robinson Jeffers and Ezra Pound, Robert Hutchins and Felix Gummers Morley. These men were neither dreary nor uncreative. On the other side stood Claude Pepper, Harry Hopkins, and Franklin Delano Roosevelt (their contemporary equivalents being Bush, Baker, and Buckley). The destruction of our free state by the powers given the executive by the Lend-Lease Act and other interventionist policies, powers now defended by the ironically named Republican Party and "responsible conservatives," led straight to the bankrupt, uncompetitive, sterile society we see around us. We say "nay" to that society so that our children may live in ordered republican freedom and the seemingly boundless creativity that Americans once knew and can know again.

On 'Western Literature'

Am I imagining things? Has *Chronicles* gone politically correct?

The article by A. Carl Bredahl ("Inscribing the American Frontier," November 1991) belongs in the *PMLA*. It must have been delivered at an MLA convention, perhaps on a panel on Western lesbian writers. Is your editorial board, or Mr. Williamson, so desperate for something positive said on Western literature by an academic that you will publish *anything* of this nature?

To begin with, the cutely punning use of "inscription" is itself characteristic of current literary "scholarship" at its superficial worst. This is pseudo-sophistication and pseudo-profundity; men have never drawn frontiers out of some abstract ideological adherence to "exclusion." It has always come naturally to them, in all civilizations throughout the whole of history without exception. Good walls make good neighbors.

Our ancestors did not build castles on hills because of insensitivity to the "environment," but because they realized (intuitively, not ideologically), as Bredahl and his ilk clearly do not, that

Janusz Kapusta

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man is not merely a molecule in the cosmic soup. As Chesterton brilliantly put it in his book on Aquinas, man is neither a thing like a mole, burrowing in the earth (as the environmentalists would have it), nor a thing like a balloon floating disembodied through the sky (as in Neoplatonism, or as in the modernist caricature of the orthodox Christian position), but rather a thing like a tree, rooted in earth, striving to reach the sun.

Who ever expected to see a *Chronicles* contributor praising a writer for rejecting "normative proscription" (does he mean *pre*scription?), and for dedicating a book to "my family, in all the best senses of that word," a phrase clearly intended to subvert the traditional family and uphold lesbian households and other innovations?

But, of course, this typical Western writer — a lesbian! a mother! how wonderful! — is acceptable, as long as she is Western.

— Jonathan Chaves
Washington, DC

Mr. Williamson Replies:

Who is invoking the need for political correctness here, *Chronicles* or Mr. Chaves? At the foot of the magazine's masthead, Mr. Chaves will find the printed statement, "The views expressed in *Chronicles* are the authors' alone." The editors, once they have commissioned or accepted an article (Mr. Bredahl's was commissioned), do not make it a practice to impose their own opinions upon the author. A. Carl Bredahl, as the author of a fascinating book on Western narrative, has certainly earned the right to have his ideas treated with editorial respect, at *Chronicles* as elsewhere.

Bredahl's central thesis, which is that American literature has historically attempted to erect a wall against the "chaos" beyond civilization that to many people is simply reality, makes perfect sense to me. H.L. Mencken, in his attack at the beginning of this century upon literary Puritanism, was saying essentially the same thing in other terms. As for "normative proscription," Bredahl is praising a quality of literary freshness, not acts of sodomy. (Thank goodness he didn't mention that Willa Cather was a rather candid lesbian.) The dedication to "My family, in all the best senses of that word" clearly refers to the novelist's 300 rabbits.

Nowhere in the essay does Bredahl call Sheila Ortiz Taylor a "typical Western writer," and nowhere in the issue is anyone praised for simply *being* a Western writer, period. On balance, I prefer the Southern ones, myself.

— Chilton Williamson, Jr.

On 'Race-Norming'

Robert G. Holland (Vital Signs, February 1992) deserves great praise for ferreting out the insidious truth about race-normed tests. As he touched on, race-norming has been skirted by the mainstream media because it hits just a little too close to home. Pick up virtually any trade journal for print or broadcast media and chances are you will find advice on attracting minority talent.

One oft-advanced thesis in such pieces is that "newsroom diversity" will help attract readers and viewers in an age when younger generations have little use for news. This, I submit, is one of the most damaging fallacies of the race-driven world view. Implicitly, and increasingly explicitly, we are told that there are certain things that the majority race *cannot* understand. This means that rational thought and discourse have little value, that ill-informed prejudices and misconceptions will do when we talk about the great issues of the day. Most importantly, it means that there is no such thing as the truth or facts. Little wonder, then, that the mainstream media so often get them wrong.

— Jeff A. Taylor
Silver Springs, MD

LIBERAL ARTS

BUSH OPPOSES QUOTAS?

"On 16 May 1989 I announced my 5 point program to increase representation of Hispanics in the Department of the Navy civilian workforce and established a goal of 5 percent Hispanic representation by 1992. [O]ur Hispanic workforce is now 3.7 percent while the United States Hispanic population is approximately 9 percent. This 3.7 percent represents only a .2 percent increase of our civilian workforce over the past 2 years and causes me concern about meeting my 5 percent goal in 1992.

"In his speech before Congress celebrating our Desert Storm victory, the President said of the members of our armed forces 'Let us honor them as individual men and women of every race, all creeds and colors, by setting the face of this nation against discrimination, bigotry and hate.' We in the Department of the Navy can do no less; we must provide greater access to job opportunities for a seriously underrepresented segment of our population."

— from a November 1991 administrative message from the Secretary of the Navy to all Navy personnel.

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THE APRIL *Chronicles* examines several aspects of the Hispanic contribution to the civilization of this hemisphere. Five hundred years ago a Genoan captain led a small Spanish expedition to the *terra incognita* that has become the Americas, and in a year in which we will hear the hoots and jeers of semiliterate journalists (Kirkpatrick Sale) bent on defaming the Spanish conquest, we thought it would be a fitting occasion to pay tribute to the hardihood and the spiritual depth of the Hispanic peoples of the Americas.

In assembling this issue, we are leaning on the talents of two winners of The Ingersoll Foundation's T.S. Eliot award: Mario Vargas Llosa, who received the 1991 award, and Jorge Luis Borges, who received the first of these awards.

THE "CHURCH NOTES" section in the February 2, 1992, issue of *National Review* requires attention and a word in response. In this little essay, the editor of that magazine informs us that the traditional right is under some obligation to recognize that its adversaries who call themselves conservatives but are pragmatically committed to an ever growing leviathan state must be supported in their ambition because the alternative is unthinkable: permitting a Democratic triumph this next November. What is omitted from Mr. O'Sullivan's calculus is the obvious fact that being swallowed by a liberalism that calls itself *conservative* and *Republican* is more dangerous to an earlier right than anything the honest left can accomplish. Big-government conservatism is indeed our mortal enemy, one which leaves us with no function and no legitimate ground upon which to stand. Confusion about this danger since the election of 1980 and the preemption of the leadership of the Reagan movement by a people who were not originally a part of it has paralyzed the American right. Apart from certain dramatic achievements, as in the appointment of a new judiciary and the strengthening of our military forces to put pressure on a declining communist power, we experienced the anomaly of two great conservative electoral victories followed by two terms of moderate Republican government. Now, under Bush we have a third, this time even more disappointing. There are circumstantial explanations for this situation in the partial or total Democratic control of Congress from 1980 through 1992. But they are not of sufficient force to justify the self-distortion that has come from forgetting that our only business is counterrevolution, and that sometimes such commitment requires an unforgiving posture toward all temporizers—soft Republicans who would never extend to us the loyalty that Mr. O'Sullivan recommends as our only legitimate course of action at the present moment.

The agreement to put being in power ahead of being right is a strategy for servility and self-degradation. And for final defeat. Devotion to that compromise has been the problem with New York and Washington conservatism in general. It is also what is wrong with *National Review*.

—*M.E. Bradford*

NATIONAL EDUCATION DAY was signed into law by President Bush and Congress last March 20. At first sight this new holiday looks like the President's bid to be taken seriously as the "education President." In fact, educators nationwide celebrated it as a tribute to their profession. But a closer look at the bill indicates that it actually had nothing at all to do with schools or teachers or the state of American education; the words "school," "teacher," and "student" are nowhere to be found in the legislation.

Education Day was enacted for a different reason: to honor both the Rabbi Menachem Schneerson, leader of the mystical Lubavitch movement, and the Seven Noahide Laws, which according to the Babylonian Talmud are the minimal moral duties to which mankind is bound. The congressional proclamation states this forthrightly, and bears reprinting: "Whereas Congress recognizes the historical tradition of ethical values and principles which are the basis of civilized society and upon which our great Nation was founded; Whereas these ethical values and principles have been the bedrock of society from the dawn of civilization, when they were known as the Seven Noahide Laws; . . . Whereas the Lubavitch movement has fostered and promoted these ethical values and principles throughout the world; Whereas Rabbi Menachem Schneerson, leader of the Lubavitch movement, is universally respected and revered and his eighty-ninth birthday falls on March 26, 1991; Whereas in tribute to this great spiritual leader, 'the rebbe,' this, his ninetieth year will be seen as one of 'education and giving,' the year in which we turn to education and charity to return the world to the moral and ethical values contained in the Seven Noahide Laws; and Whereas this will be reflected in an international scroll of honor signed by the President of the United States and other heads of state; Now, therefore, be it Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, that March 26, 1991, . . . is designated as 'Education Day, U.S.A.' The President is requested to issue a proclamation calling upon the people of the United States to observe such day with appropriate ceremonies and activities."

Lubavitchers are the largest and most visible Hasidic group. They proselytize worldwide, operate an impressive network of day schools and publishing houses across the country, and have been astoundingly successful in raising funds for their activities. It is also widely believed that they see their leader, or "rebbe," as the Messiah, but they have thus far refused to either confirm or deny this. The Seven Noahide Laws are the talmudic designation for the divine demands ad-

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dressed to Adam and Noah. They prohibit idolatry, blasphemy, bloodshed, sexual sins, theft, eating from a living animal, and contain the injunction to establish a legal system for the observance of the other six laws. Some scholars view them as a link between Judaism and Christianity, as universal norms of ethical conduct and as a means of determining international law and fundamental human rights.

The Lubavitchers' devotion to their family, faith, and community is admirable, but what is questionable is a federal bill honoring them under the pretext of commemorating American education. The Mosaic Law honored by Christians is forbidden to be taught or even posted in public (i.e., government) schools because of the constitutional separation of church and state, but it seems that the President and Congress, in enacting "Education Day," have crossed this very line to promote a small Jewish sect that may well believe the Messiah is alive and living in Brooklyn. Lubavitchers also evangelize worldwide, and, according to the commemorative legislation, the U.S. government has agreed to aid them in their efforts by organizing "appropriate ceremonies and activities" and by assigning this special day to "an international scroll of honor," all in an attempt "to return the world to the moral and ethical values contained in the Seven Noahide Laws." Is this a violation of the First Amendment, or merely an executive prerogative on behalf of the "New World Order"? President Bush and Lamar Alexander have yet to say.

National holidays and commemorative events are the quickest and most direct way for politicians to court special interest groups and to appease those groups to whom they already owe their political soul. This is why we have the many days and weeks devoted to black and women's history and to gay and AIDS awareness. But these commemorative events are also the means by which social engineers attempt to mold and manipulate culture. Like Robespierre and the Jacobins who gutted the French calendar and institutionalized commemorations of the God of Reason, the "new Jacobins," as Claes Ryn has termed them, in Washington today wish to establish a national pantheon of democratic saints whom all Americans will be forced by law to pay homage. Their crowning glory came with the declaration of a national holiday for Martin Luther King.

That this pantheon of saints is to be imposed on us from above — by federal fiat, with the threat of violence if necessary, as in the case of Arizona and Martin Luther King Day — is clear by the deceptive and clandestine way in which "Education Day" was passed in honor of the Rabbi Schneerson. The Jacobin Poupinel said two hundred years ago, "Let us use civic pomp to make the people forget their old displays of superstition," but the statement could just as well be mistaken for those made today by education bureaucrats like Chester Finn, who several years ago called for the institution of a new civil religion based on patriotic holidays and the birthday of "Dr." King. If the U.S. Department of Education is to be the National Church, then what better name for a new religious holiday than "Education Day, U.S.A."

— Theodore Pappas

BLACK MISCHIEF continues to bubble in the Caribbean, and the Reverend Jesse Jackson, U.S. Representative Charles Rangel (Democrat, New York), the American Bar Association, the Church World Service, and the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights have demanded that the Bush administration grant temporary political asylum to the 14,000 Haitian refugees taken off small boats by the U.S. Coast Guard. The Haitians are fleeing what the administration identifies as the economic crisis resulting from the embargo imposed by the Organization of American States pending the reinstatement of the deposed president, Father Aristide, and what the Reverend Jackson perceives as "political persecution."

The federal judiciary had until recently blocked large-scale repatriation of the refugees and forced the U.S. government to investigate claims for political asylum on a case-by-case basis. To date, about two thousand Haitians have been granted the favor. "There's no question," Rangel has charged, "if they were not poor, if they were not black, that we would find some compassion to let these people in," while Jackson has emphasized what he sees as a want of consistency in Washington's policies. "If we can restore the emir to his throne in Kuwait," he insists, "we can restore democracy in our own hemisphere."

It is ironic that the United States, which is regarded by so much of the world and indeed by a vocal minority of its own citizens as a historically wicked society, should be almost universally expected, on account of its "idealistic" tradition, to assume a charitable and self-sacrificing role in every international situation. Set aside, for the moment, the suspicion that had President Bush responded instantly to the coup in Haiti by dispatching U.S. Marines to liberate that island, as President Reagan did in the case of Grenada in 1983, the Reverend Jesse Jackson would have been the first to denounce the racist, imperialist action by the American government. The truth is that the United States was paid, by the Kuwaitis and others, to expel the Iraqi invaders; that the United States has real interests, both economic and strategic, in Kuwait, as do its Western allies; and that Iraq was developing nuclear weapons with which to blackmail the rest of the Middle East and perhaps the world. But what interests does the United States — or anyone else other than the Haitians themselves — have in the constitutional crisis in Haiti, an entirely insignificant country whose history since the days of Toussaint L'Ouverture has been one of fecklessness and barbarism?

Yes, there is violence in Haiti, as the Reverend Jackson claims. There has always been violence in Haiti, and there has never been anything properly describable as democracy. The island has had seven governments, including the present one, since 1986 when the Duvalier dictatorship was overthrown after 29 years in power. From 1804, when the country became the first black-led republic in the world, until 1957 its history has been chiefly a record of chaos and bloodshed. The line between economic refugees and political ones is not always clear, but it is safe to say that if Haitians today are victims of political persecution, then they have always been such. And not only Haitians, but most of the rest of the Third World peoples. Is it the duty of the United States therefore to wel-

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come all of these onto its soil? Again, it is strange how a history of good deeds, much more than bad ones, is perceived in the end to create still further obligation on the part of the benefactor.

Jackson argues that the refugees not only should, but ought to be, repatriated as soon as democracy is restored to Haiti. When will that be? The year 3004? And who will make them go there if they do not wish to do so? Surely not the Reverend Jackson. Nor does recent history suggest this eventuality. The Nicaraguan "political" refugees did not return home following the defeat at the polls of Daniel Ortega; the Salvadoran "politicals" show no sign of wanting to leave the United States, although the political situation has improved markedly in El Salvador since their coming here; and it is a safe bet that only the most upper class among the Cuban refugees will say farewell to Miami when Castro's day is done. Granting asylum in this country to everyone who demands it will result principally in making the United States an asylum in quite another sense of the word.

As the racist demagoguery of the Reverend Jackson and Representative Rangel perhaps adumbrates, it used to be the American Jews who were accused of harboring "divided loyalties." Today, racial and ethnic groups all over the United States are constantly harangued by self-appointed "leaders" to identify themselves with African tribes, Mexican *paisanos*, Muslim *fellahin*, Iranian terrorists, and to act accordingly — with violence if necessary. So much for the promised benefits of a "multicultural" America. For now, however, what I want to know is this: if the Haitian immigrants in Miami and New York City are such great patriots and lovers of the democratic homeland, why aren't they back there fighting the junta that has killed their democracy, instead of up here rioting for U.S. soldiers to do the job for them?

— *Chilton Williamson, Jr.*

THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS controversy is not — as some have argued — about Christianity fearing for its life in the face of new and dreadful facts. The claim that the Scrolls contain information that calls into question Christian verities is pure poppycock. So is the spurious charge of some British mountebanks that the Vatican tried to suppress the Scrolls. Vatican-bashing carries remarkably slight conviction, which is surprising when one considers that Roman Catholic scholars did more to publish the Scrolls than any other religious group. No, the suppression of the Dead Sea Scrolls had nothing to do with protecting Christianity.

Christianity, like every other great religion, rests not on historical facts but supernatural revelation, and those who believe the Scrolls constitute a missing link between Judaism and Christianity (post facto categories) that calls into question the originality of Christianity profoundly misunderstand the character of religion in general, Christianity in particular. Christianity was born on the first Easter; it arose from the grave of Jesus Christ, rewriting the entire past of Israel and humanity alike. No fragment from a long-lost cave has any bearing at all on that simple fact of faith — or ever will.

The suppression of the Scrolls had everything to do with the pretensions of a self-important cabal of arrogant nonentities. The scandal involving the suppression of the Scrolls until the noble decision of the Huntington Library board and director — heroes of academic freedom in our time — derives from the self-importance of some not-very-accomplished scholars who were determined to "set standards" and to dictate who was worthy and who was unworthy of publishing the evidence. That's all there was to it: us against them. And the "us" was very few, and the "them" was nearly the whole scholarly world.

To understand the venality to which, for close to a half-century, the academic world has been exposed, it is necessary to know that to "publish" an ancient document means anything from simply printing a photograph of it to supplying a full account of its contents, setting, meaning, relationship to other documents, and all the rest — scholarship. Now, when a vast trove turns up, there are two ways to go. One, as taken by the honorable scholars responsible for the Christian Gnostic library discovered in Egypt at Nag Hammadi, is to publish the facsimiles of the documents and to encourage translations, which in this specific case came about in a decade or so. The other way was taken by those entrusted with the Dead Sea Scrolls. As everyone now knows, from the late 1940's to 1967, the Scrolls were controlled in "Jerusalem, Jordan"; no Jews were allowed to work on them, and many of those who dictated access to the Scrolls were notorious anti-Semites, chief among them the head of the project for the past several decades, Harvard Divinity School Professor John Strugnell. Even when the Israelis unified Jerusalem and regained access to the Judaic holy places in 1967, the Scrolls continued under the same anti-Semitic auspices as before. So we had the spectacle of a virulently anti-Semitic outfit controlling access to the spiritual treasures of Judaism — and no Jews need apply.

Well, not exactly. As time passed, a few Israelis gained admission to the charmed circle. Under Strugnell's chairmanship, the controlling body continued the established policy of restricting access to the Scrolls to its own members and their students. Only they were "competent."

If you are going to tell the world you alone are qualified to do the work, you would be wise to do the work. But not much work was done, and the work that was done was not particularly impressive. Scraps of information came out, with broad hints of what was to come, but the I-can-see-it-and-you-can't school of scholarly discourse continued to rule. For lesser folk, of course, might ruin these priceless documents by making mistakes in publishing them. Included in the lesser folk were most of the first-rate and productive scholars in the study of ancient Judaism and Christianity. Rarely have we seen so comic a parody of academic egoism.

No one who has dealt with Jerusalem-based scholarship in ancient Judaism and Christianity — Jewish and Christian alike — was surprised that these unabashed allegations of self-importance came from what were, in the aggregate, remarkably lazy and unproductive scholars. It is an old story. In the study of ancient Judaism everybody in the business knows that Jerusalem is a wasteland, an intellectual desert. The ideas that dictate terms of debate and engage scholars through-

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out the world do not originate from Jerusalem. Derivative, repetitive, trivial, self-serving exercises in arid erudition take the place of the world-class scholarship of an earlier better day at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. The great generation of the founders is now dead, and those surviving are third-rate, sterile erudites who know everything and understand nothing. No wonder they raised the stakes so high in trying to keep control of these important documents: it gave them power.

But the sad denouement tells the whole tale. When the Huntington Library announced its decision to circulate photographs of the documents for everyone to see, the archaeological authorities in Jerusalem exploded, then fumed and sputtered about "a lawsuit." They weren't sure what they would sue for or how or why, but they blustered all the same. They even talked airily about "immorality," though by this time everybody knew the difference between hot air and the cool breath of moral authority. The *New York Times* headline that week had "Israel" ready to sue, but for once private enterprise could not manipulate public interest: the Prime Minister's office, no less, said "no." The scholars in Jerusalem ate crow, and it will be their breakfast, lunch, and supper for a long time to come. Plenty of scholars throughout the world think they deserve to choke on it.

—*Jacob Neusner*

WHEN NETWORK NEWS magnates from Manhattan send their cameras to cover small towns in the Midwest, what happens? Well, when CBS News came to my hometown of Viroqua, Wisconsin, the result was a grain of truth wrapped in an inch-thick sour ball of negative hype.

When it comes to the Great Fly-Over between New York and Los Angeles, story ideas often aren't original. The CBS story had all the fingerprints of a much longer (and better) story in the *Wall Street Journal* last June. Like the *Journal*, CBS focused on the retail giant Wal-Mart and how its arrival could spell doom for small businesses. Like the *Journal*, CBS trekked to Viroqua and to Anamosa, Iowa. The network's motto must be: better late than never, and better with a TV camera.

As part of their *Eye on America* series, CBS sent reporter Frank Currier from Chicago in a folksy sweater and jeans to tell the tale. But the beginning of the story demonstrated all the shortcomings of the network news, particularly its tendency to make a drama out of everything. Drama is fine if you don't mislead the viewer in the process, but CBS began with a depressing mélange of images: "Closed" signs, locked doors, boarded-up buildings. All of these were intermixed with audio snippets of local people: "It's sad to see a town become a ghost town," "our dime store went out," "they were run out of business." Whose ghost town? Whose dime store? Whose failed business? With CBS focusing on at least two towns, viewers had no clue as to what those audio snippets were referring. Currier solemnly began: "In town after small town, Main Street is going out of business."

Those first 30 seconds may have set a mood, but they didn't tell the truth. Local viewers had to be confused, or perhaps amused. As CBS painted a picture of Midwestern ghost towns, they made the big-city mistake of showing the city limits signs for Avalanche and Bud, two of Vernon County's tiny unincorporated towns. The metropolis of Bud contains a cheese factory and the Volden family, and other than the Volden kids migrating into town, there is no depression in Bud.

As one voice declared "It's sad to see a town become a ghost town," they showed the city limits sign of Coon Valley (population 758), which is nearing extinction no time soon. I know this from a very good local authority: my dad, who's sold advertising for Viroqua's radio station for thirty years. Local businesses have suffered (and some long-lasting stores closed) due to the arrival of Wal-Mart and its buy-by-the-ton price advantage. But Currier, who cited no statistics for his earlier assertion that entire small-town Main Streets were going out of business, then contradicted himself: "Change helped save Viroqua, Wisconsin, where they beat the drums on Main Street, where merchants challenged Wal-Mart and restored faith in family business."

After the story appeared, my dad told me some local merchants were disappointed with the tone of the story. I told him the story's fairly upbeat ending came as a surprise. While most of our television entertainment aims to capture our attention by making us feel warm and fuzzy, the news shows often succeed by exaggerating the negative, aiming at our anxieties about the future. After all, in the Viroqua I grew up in, businesses came and went, survived the Great Inflation, boomed a little in the 1980's, and yet never came to the attention of the national news before.

Viroqua may have had its four minutes of national fame, but in the translation from real-life experience to small-screen drama, the network's cinematic montages failed to make any distinction between the thorny challenge of business competition and the imminent migration of small-town America, leaving everything behind for the wildlife.

—*Tim Graham*

LIBERAL ARTS

CULTURAL ENRICHMENT

Ethnic squabbling erupted into a violent confrontation between 25 detainees and their guards at the Federal Immigration and Naturalization Service detention center in lower Manhattan last December. According to the *New York Times*, a dozen people were injured, including five corrections officers.

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by Samuel Francis

The Jungle of Empire

One of the redeeming features of imperialism is that it makes for great adventure stories. The works of H. Rider Haggard and Rudyard Kipling and the literature of the American West from James Fenimore Cooper to Louis L'Amour would not have been possible without the empires and imperial problems that provide the setting for their tales. The reason for the relationship ought to be fairly obvious.

Empires offer all the standard fare of blood, guts, intrigue, romance, and action: villains plotting to overthrow civilization, heroes striving to protect it; crumbling cultures and uncharted jungles that house mystery, danger, and immense rewards for those bold enough to seize them. Empires may make deserts and call them peace, but at least they also offer a lot of entertainment that sometimes lasts longer than the civilization that imagines it is perpetuating itself through territorial expansion.

Today, we still have empires, or at least one, but the literature it spawns makes the penny dreadfuls and potboilers of the Victorian Era seem like the stuff of Homer and Vergil. I can think of no great adventure tale to emerge from the consolidation of what may turn out to be the largest transnational apparatus of power yet to appear in history, and the cosmopolites of the American megapower will have to pass their idle hours with Stephen King and Tom Clancy. The best spy novels produced by the Cold War, such as those of John Le Carré, so far from celebrating empire, in fact are somber introspections on what power demands of human beings and what it takes from them.

It is precisely because contemporary globalism is so uninspiring and because its power is not acquired through the combined exertions of muscle, bone, and brain that it produces few compelling tales of what it cost to create. Indeed, the costs of modern imperialism, like the bonds that hold it together, remain invisible. Unlike the regimes constructed by the British, the Romans, or the Macedonians, the one that flutters about the world today was not built on force and human risk but on an entirely different kind of power.

Machiavelli distinguished between two kinds of rulers. There are those who, imitating lions, base their power on force, and those, imitating the fox, who base it on cunning. Ideally, insofar as Machiavelli permitted himself ideals, a ruler ought to combine the two traits, but he recognized that human psychology being what it is, few potentates were capable of doing so for very long. Several centuries after Machiavelli, another Italian, Vilfredo Pareto, revived his distinction and elaborated it into an entire psychology of power.

Pareto discussed two classes of what he called "residues," his term for basic instinctual drives that underlie human behavior. "Class I," as he called one group of residues, consists of "the instinct for combinations," and those in whom it is strong tend to be innovative and manipulative, or, in a word, cunning. They tend to respond to problems by "combining" different elements — ideas, people, institutions, resources — to produce new instruments that can resolve the problem.

Residues of "Class II" or the "instinct for the persistence of aggregates," on the other hand, yield behavior that is socially conservative. Those in whom they are powerful dislike and avoid change — their ideas and behavioral habits are "aggregates" that tend to "persist" — and they typically respond to problems by appeals to group solidarity. Hence, family, race, class, nation, community, religious sect, and other group identities are important bonds for those in whom Class II residues are strong. They tend to avoid innovation and manipulation and, like lions, to rely on force to deal with problems.

In some societies, Pareto argued, Class I residues (or the people in whom they are dominant) rise to the top, while in others, Class II types emerge. Whichever type emerges, it forms an elite and seeks to perpetuate its power and construct a society that reflects and supports its mentality and habits. Pareto believed that ancient Athens in its so-called "Golden Age" of empire and cultural brilliance was a rather good example of a Class I or manipulative regime, in which commercial classes, political demagoguery, and intellectual and artistic expression were prevalent, while Sparta in the same period was a classic case of a Class II or "leonine" elite: unimaginative, strongly attached to traditional identities, and relying on force. His typology corresponds more or less to what Aristotle said of the two societies, and the Greek philosopher argued that the weakness of Sparta was that it recognized only "one kind of goodness," namely skill in war.

To Pareto, a lion was not necessarily better or worse than a fox, and like Machiavelli (or Aristotle), he believed that a human being or a ruler or a society in which one kind of residue was predominant to the exclusion of the other was particularly weak. Since each type tends to respond to problems and challenges only by means of the behavior, attitudes, and ideas that its dominant instinct recognizes, it is unable to deal with crises on which such responses don't work.

Hence, a society or a regime in which foxes are predominant will be unable to prosecute wars effectively or respond to challenge from enemies that rely on force. Similarly, a society or a regime in which lions are the dominant class will tend to stagnate and to meet every challenge with force, sometimes brutally. Sooner or later, the habitual responses of each type fail to work. Sooner or later, each type runs into problems that its characteristic style of behavior and thought can't solve, and it is overwhelmed. The result is the fall of one elite and the rise of another, leading Pareto to comment in a famous phrase that "history is a graveyard of aristocracies" or elites.

Pareto did not know or talk much about the United States in the 19th century, but if he had, he might have enjoyed himself. There he would have seen a protracted social conflict between two kinds of societies — one,

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based in the American South and later in the West, that was strongly attached to such social groupings as community, region, family, race, and nation, and the other, based in the Northeast, that was innovative, more loosely attached to elemental social bonds and identities, and resembled in some ways the Athens of the Golden Age. The conflict between the two was resolved in the American Civil War, when the Northeastern foxes destroyed the Southern lions, though they did so not so much through their skill in war as through their successful and often brilliant manipulation of their economic and technological resources.

Having suppressed the challenge from the lions, however, the foxes of the Northeast proceeded to mold American society into a form more suitable for their continued power. Commercial, industrial, and technological skills became a main avenue to wealth and political power. Demagoguery, the manipulation of the population through patronage and the techniques of mass democracy, became a standard feature of American politics. Culturally, the ideologies of the era centered around the favorite themes of foxes: progress, individualism, innovation, opportunity, acquisition of wealth.

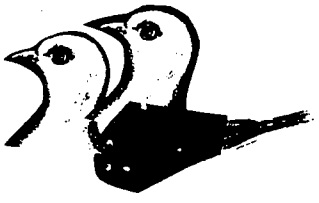
Eventually, the dominant groups in the new nation were destroyed by their own success. Having built large organizations that relied on the manipulative skills of managers, not even the victors in the social and political revolution of the Civil War could hold on to the reins of power when corporations, mass political parties, unions, government bureaucracies, and mass universities and foundations replaced the smaller-scale institutions of bourgeois America. Lacking the instinctual group bonds and loyalties that characterize lions, the bourgeois foxes never knew what hit them, and to this day most of them still don't.

What has emerged in the 20th century is no less an imperial regime than those run by the Romans or the British, but unlike those empires, the managerial hegemony today is founded on the manipulative proclivities and skills of foxes. Hence, the elite of the imperial system thinks of social problems and challenges only in terms of manipulation. Instead of punishment for criminals, they respond with rehabilitation and therapy. Instead of war with foreign enemies, they try negotiations, foreign aid, exporting democracy, and applied social engineering. Instead of bluntly repressing domestic rivals and rebels, they meet them with discussion and social reconstruction to remove the "root causes" of discontent.

For all the murky conspiracy theories concocted by the left about the "power elite" that supposedly plotted the murder of John F. Kennedy, clobbered the New Left, and leapt into the Vietnam War in a fit of 19th-century imperialism, the left has succeeded in grandly missing the point of the very regime it purports to oppose. The managerial regime doesn't assassinate much of anybody, and when it tries, as it did in the early 1960's, its efforts look like something out of *Get Smart*. Exploding cigars and poisoned wet suits were the weapons the CIA presented as the devices for the assassination of Fidel Castro, and with enemies like the pot-bellied spooks of Langley, the *caudillo* of Havana could expect to live to a ripe old age. The Black Panthers and the Weathermen of the 60's ran into trouble only when they encountered local and state police less attuned to the devices of the Higher Repression designed by the marshals of the managerial state, which simply rounded up the rebels, listened to their whines, and then sent them home to become TV celebrities and real estate tycoons. Having locked the malcontents into the pleasures of a managerial system that manipulates and dominates even as it rewards and entertains, the elite had nothing more to fear from the left, new or old.

As for war, foxes don't much care for it, though when they engage in it, as Pareto noted, "the sword is rattled only before the weak." The managerial regime has so far rattled its sword and thumped its chest in Vietnam, Grenada, Libya, Panama, and Iraq, while stronger powers such as the late and unlamented Soviet Union that conquer whole continents and massacre entire planeloads of civilians are too tightly locked into the global system of management to be the target of serious military force. What is striking about the way in which the managerial system "fought" the Cold War is not that the threat was contrived or invented but that, despite the reality of Soviet aggression and subversion, the Western managerial states did so little to confront and resolve the threat. It was never war but merely preparation for war that the system and its managers cared for; and the real purpose of all the vast apparatus of armies, navies, planes, bombs, and missiles was not to use them to defend the West in war

LIBERAL ARTS



WELFARE FRAUD

Wisconsin welfare recipients arrive by the bus load—from Chicago. A letter from Scott Savage published in the *Wisconsin State Journal* last June reported rampant welfare fraud, and state legislator David Prosser confirmed the story with his own investigation in January. Surprised to find taxis waiting at the Milwaukee Greyhound station, Savage was told by a taxi driver that "during the first few days of the month [when general assistance checks must be picked up in person] he picked up many fares at the Greyhound station, drove them and waited as they picked up their Wisconsin welfare checks and then returned them to the Greyhound station for their return trips to Illinois, Indiana, and Michigan."

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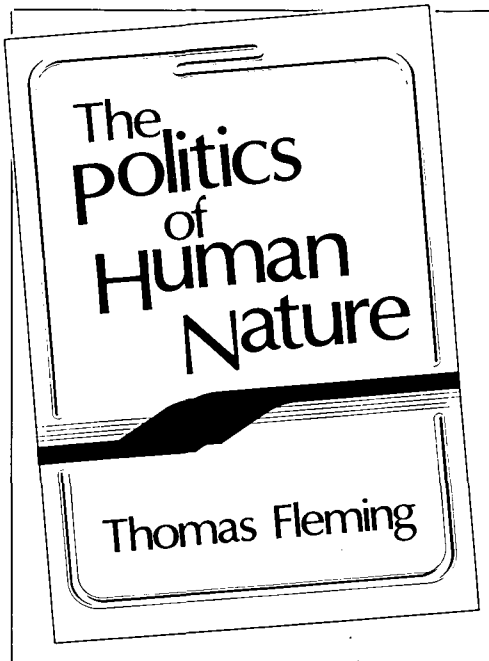
with communism but to enhance the domestic power of those who designed, bought, built, and managed them and the bureaucracies that produced them.

Instead of war and repression through force, the managerial system relies on the manipulative arts of modern communications, public administration, advertising, propaganda, and mass entertainment. In order to extend its reach to the fullest, it has to break down the institutional bonds and beliefs that resist such manipulation, and hence it undermines family, class, property, community, religious sects, and racial and ethnic identities.

Having now perfected the manipulative arts to global scale, it is in the process of extending its dominion to the entire world, actually disengaging from its territorial base in the nation-state and constructing a transnational apparatus of power by which nations and their populations, resources, and cultures can be managed. There is a good deal of talk about how computers and other postindustrial technologies will lead to a radical decentralization of organizations. Don't bet on it. The technology works both ways. It can be used to promote decentralization, but it also lends itself to tighter control from the center. Human nature seems to prefer more power and less responsibility, and my own bet is that postindustrial technologies will accommodate that preference.

The question, of course, is: will it last? Will human nature prove to be so easily manipulable that elites dedicated to infinite and eternal manipulation endure? If Pareto's analysis of the psychological anatomy of the regime of foxes is useful in understanding how and why it operates the way it does, his view of how it crumbles is also suggestive. The process of decline is almost Hegelian in its dialectic. Sooner or later, a regime based on the application of force and appeal to collective solidarity withers in the face of challenges to which its elite is unable to respond, given its own psychological and behavioral tendencies. Last year this is exactly what happened to the Soviet Union, when its elite, utterly clueless as to the nature of the crises its regime was encountering and unable to manipulate its way out of these crises, collapsed rather like the wonderful one hoss shay.

By the same argument, sooner or later a regime based almost purely on manipulation and its arts will encounter challenges that just can't be manipulated. Last year also, the American managerial system ran into exactly that sort of problem in Saddam Hussein, who simply ignored all the negotiations, threats, and peace marches mounted by his adversaries and who even succeeded in ignoring his adversaries' devastating military victory. But sooner or later, also, a manipulative regime will even run into a challenge that it not only can't manipulate but also can't even devastate or will refuse to devastate, and when that happens, the manipulative regime crumbles no less quickly than its counterpart based on force. This is not a happy situation, but, if Pareto is right, it seems to be a law of history. At least it makes for exciting adventure stories. ◈



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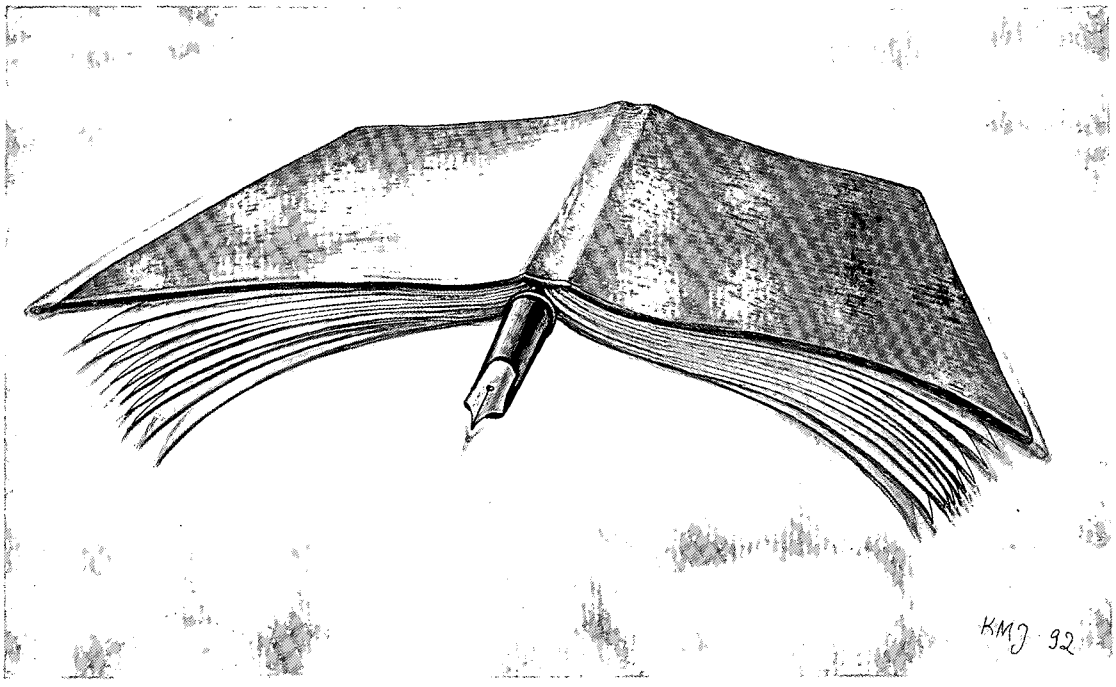

Krystyna Jachniewicz

Literature and Freedom

by Mario Vargas Llosa

Nothing has pushed forward cultural life as much as the invention of printing, nor has anything contributed more to its democratization. From Gutenberg's time until today, the book has been the best propeller and depository of knowledge, as well as an irreplaceable source of pleasure.

However, to many, its future is uncertain. I recall a lecture I heard at Cambridge a few years ago. It was entitled "Literature Is Doomed," and its thesis was that the alphabetic culture, the one based on writing and books, is perishing. According to the lecturer, audiovisual culture will soon replace it. The written word, and whatever it represents, are already an anachronism, since the more avant-garde and urgent knowledge required for the experience of our time is transmitted and stored not in books but in machines, and has signals and not letters as its tools. The lecturer had spent two weeks in Mexico where he had traveled everywhere, and even in the underground he had no difficulty, though he spoke no Spanish. For the entire system of instructions in the Mexican underground consists of nothing but arrows, lights, and figures. This way of communication is more universal, he explained, for it overcomes, for instance, language barriers, a problem congenital to the alphabetic system.

The lecturer drew all the right conclusions, with no fear, from his thesis. He maintained that all Third World countries, instead of persisting in those long and costly campaigns aimed at teaching their illiterate masses how to read and write, should introduce them to what will be the primordial source of knowledge: the handling of machines. The formula that the slender speaker used with a defiant wink still rings in my ears: "Not books but gadgets." And, as a consolation to all those who might be saddened by the prospect of a world in which, what was yesterday made and obtained by writing and reading, would be done and attained through projectors, screens, speakers, and tapes, he reminded us that the alphabetic period in human history had in any case been short-lived. Just as mankind had, for thousands of years, created splendid civilizations without books, so the same could happen in the future. Why, then, should the underdeveloped countries insist on imposing an obsolete education on their citizens? So as to keep on being underdeveloped?

The lecturer did not think the alphabetic culture would totally vanish, nor did he wish it. He forecast that the culture of the book would survive in certain university and intellectual enclaves, for the entertainment and benefit of the marginal groups interested in producing and consuming it, as something curious and tangential to the main course of the life of nations.

The exponent of this thesis was not Marshall McLuhan,

Mario Vargas Llosa's most recent book is La verdad de las mentiras (A Writer's Reality). *Last November he received the Ingersoll Foundation's 1991 T.S. Eliot Award for Creative Writing, for which this was his acceptance speech.*

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the Canadian prophet who announced the death of the book in 1980. It was Sir Edmund Leach, eminent British social anthropologist, then provost of King's College. That is to say, a distinguished mandarin of the alphabetic culture of our time. We should not take such statements lightly. If Sir Edmund Leach thinks that the alphabet stinks, something in the alphabet must be rotten.

It is true that for many people the written word is becoming more and more dispensable. The most flagrant example is to be found among the children of our time, to whom television programs give what novels of Karl May, Salgari, Jules Verne, and the great Alexandre Dumas gave me. Radio and television have taken the place of newspapers and magazines as the main source of information on current affairs, and although the number of readers in the world is growing in absolute terms, there is no doubt that, relatively speaking, the printed word has less influence today than it had in the past. Books are less important to the literate people of today (considering the time they devote to them and the effect they have on their lives) than they were to the literate people of the past. This should worry us, because although I doubt that the prophecy of Professor Leach will materialize soon, if it does come true it will probably be a disaster for humanity.

My pessimism is based on two certainties. First, that the audiovisual culture is more easily controlled, manipulated, and degraded by power than the written word. Because of the solitude in which it is born, the speed at which it can be reproduced and circulated, the secrecy with which it conveys its message, and the lasting mark on people's conscience of literary images, the written word has revealed a stubborn resistance to enslavement. In all totalitarian and authoritarian societies, if there is dissidence, it is through the written word that it manifests and keeps itself alive. In a good number of places, writing is the last bastion of freedom. With its demise, the submission of minds to political power could be total. In the kingdom of audiovisual, the master of technology and budget is the king of cultural production. And in a closed society, this always means, directly or indirectly, the state. It would decide what men should and should not learn, say, hear, and (in the end) dream. There would be no underground culture, no counterculture, no *samizdat*. This society, once personal choice and initiative in cultural activities are removed, would easily slip into mental slavery.

And the robot citizens of that world would probably also be dumb. Because, unlike books, the audiovisual product tends to limit imagination, dull sensibility, and create passive minds. I am not a retrograde, allergic to audiovisual culture. On the contrary, after literature I love nothing more than the cinema and I deeply enjoy a good television program. But the impact of the audiovisual on the spirit never matches the effect of books: it is ephemeral, and the participation of the listener's or the spectator's intellect and fantasy is minimal compared with that of the reader's. Even in the few countries where television has reached a high level of creativity, the average program, that which sets the pattern, is cheap, its strategy being to embrace the widest audience running for the lowest common denominator.

I do not believe this to be accidental. Technology and budgets exert a strong coercive force on originality and can suffocate and destroy it by guiding it too rigidly. This is the reason why the most typical TV product is the serial, like *Dallas* or *Dynasty*, in which the director seems to be nothing more than a clever user (or servant) of those mighty tools: the economic and technical means.

The nature of culture — either alphabetic or audiovisual, free or enslaved — does not stem from historical determination, from the blind and impersonal evolution of science. The decisive factor will always be man's choice, the decision of powers that can drive society in one direction or another. If books and gadgets are caught in a deadly fight and the latter defeat the former, the responsibility will lie with those who chose to allow it to happen. But I do not think this Orwellian nightmare will really occur, for our fate, as writers and readers, is linked to that illness or vice called freedom, which humanity caught rather late in history and which affects a good part of mankind in apparently an incurable way.

Writing is a solitary business. Confronted with the piece of paper, pen in hand, so that what we call inspiration can pour out, one has no other choice but to isolate oneself from immediate life and plunge into the innermost universe of memory, nostalgia, secret desires, intuition, and instinct, all ingredients that nourish the creative imagination. The process that gives birth to a fiction is long, difficult, and fascinating. Although I have lived through this process many times since I wrote my first story, I have never really been able fully to understand it. I am not sure if this happens to all writers, but in my case at least, even though I try to be lucid when writing and attempt to exert a rational control over the story, characters, dialogues, and landscape that appear as the words flow out, I can never avoid a certain darkness that, like a shadow, escorts the conscious task of writing a novel.

The element that rushes out spontaneously from the most secret corner of one's personality imposes a special coloring upon the story one is trying to write, establishes hierarchies among the characters that sometimes subtly overturn our conscious intention, and adorns or impregnates that which we are narrating with a meaning or symbolism that, in some cases, not only does not coincide with our ideas but can even go as far as to substantially contradict them. The writer, the artist, is much more than mere intelligence, reason, ideas. He is also that shady region of one's personality that our consciousness is always repressing or ignoring. In the creative process, as in the magical exorcisms and healings of the primitive, that region manifests and imposes itself, restoring that completeness of the individual that, in almost all other social or private activities, appears incised, reduced only to its conscious counterpart.

Perhaps because they are born from the associated effort of reason and unreason, of intellect and intuition, of the free flight of fantasy and the dark intentions of the unconscious, the products of art and literature possess the continuity that allows them gracefully to cross the centuries and the barriers of geography and language, maintaining the vigor and power that time, instead of spoiling, increases. The peripeteia of the gods and the men of ancient Greece, which a blind poet recited three thousand years ago, still dazzle us today and, just like those remote ancestors who heard them

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for the first time sung by the rhapsodies, we too are made to experience vicariously those ceremonies of passion and adventure that are eagerly desired by the human soul of every civilization. The fire that Shakespeare lit when he recreated in his tragedies and comedies the Elizabethan universe — from the plebeian street gossip with its fresco of picturesque types and its rich vulgarity, to the refined astuteness of the struggle for power of rulers and warriors, or the delicacies and torments of love and the feast of desire — still burns every time those stories materialize before us on a stage, embracing us, over time and distance, with their verbal enchantment. Brooding over the flesh-and-bone beings and the demons of his time, Shakespeare sketched certain images in which men of every era discover their own faces.

This miracle would not have been possible if the old poet from the beginnings of Greek civilization and the English playwright had not enjoyed, apart from their marvelous command of language and an incandescent imagination, the possibility of giving free rein to their private phantoms, letting them move around as they wished, and submitting to their dictates when confronted with the papyrus or the piece of paper.

The civilization to which both of them belonged were repressive ones that managed to maintain themselves by the discrimination and exploitation of the poor and the weak. But in the specific field in which Homer and Shakespeare operated, artistic creation — what we, making use of a modern concept, would call "permissibility" — was almost absolute. For the Greek, the poet was a spokesman of the gods, an intermediary from the other world in whom the artistic and religious values entwined in an indissoluble manner. How could a culture that, unlike ours, did not separate literature and art from morality and religion, the spirit from the body, have hindered the work of a man whose function was that of a priest and a seer as well as that of an illusionist? To that unconditional freedom that the poet enjoyed, the artist and the thinker — the communication bridges between men and gods, this world and the other — the Greek culture owes its particular development, the evolution that allowed it both to attain a prodigious richness of invention and knowledge in the fields of ideas, art, and literature, and to fix a certain pattern of beauty and thought that changed the history of the world, imposing upon it a rationality from which the entire technical and scientific progress as well as the gradual humanization of society were to derive.

It has been said that the history of Greece represents the victory of reason over the irrational straitjackets of pre-Christian civilizations. This may be true. But that triumphant awakening of reason over the coat of mail of superstitions and taboos that was to precipitate the world towards its unstoppable development would not have been possible without that latitude for thinking and creating that the Hellenic culture allowed its philosophers and artists. The triumph of reason followed the triumph of liberty. Perhaps for the first time in the course of human history the poet was not a man simply in charge of putting rhythm and music to what already existed — the legends and collective myths, the enthroned religion — and of illustrating in fables the established morality, but was instead an independent individual, left to his own devices, authorized to explore the unknown using imagination, introspection, desire, and reason and to open the doors of the city to his private ghosts.

Shakespeare's genius could not have flourished without the unlimited freedom he had to show human passions (as Dr. Johnson wrote) with the impunity that he did. Not all of his contemporaries, however, enjoyed this freedom. The Tudor Era was not tolerant, but rather a despotic and brutal one, so much so that the historian G.B. Harrison, referring to the Vandalic destructions of statues, images, paintings, architectural works, and religious books that followed the first reform of Henry VIII, has compared that age to Germany and the Soviet Union under Hitler and Stalin. But drama was considered a vulgar and plebeian amusement, too far below the world of salons, academies, and libraries where the prevailing culture was produced and preserved, to be worthy of the punctilious control that was exerted over religious or political texts, for example. Power, in the age of Elizabeth I, prohibited English historical works and also shut down theaters on several occasions. But fortunately the dramatists were disdained and left in peace, so that — according to Harrison — the theater of London was the only place where the common man could hear direct and honest commentaries about life. No one made better use than Shakespeare of this accidental privilege granted to dramatists in Elizabethan England. The result is that fresco of man and his demons — political, social, religious, or sexual — that dazzles us because of its variety and subtlety, while enlightening us more than an army of psychologists, anthropologists, and sociologists on the vertiginous complexity of human nature. In the Shakespeare character, for the first time, flowered that man in whom, as Georges Bataille wrote, "contradictions immerse and empathize."

As in literature, so in almost all fields of human affairs, freedom awakens in an unforeseen way, by accident or through the negligence of the dominant culture, that fails to legislate or organize certain areas of activity. Thanks to this exceptional privilege, individual initiative can copiously manifest itself there. The result is always, sooner or later, creative impetus, winds of change. The activity that, due to chance or to prejudices or distractions of those who exercise power, is let loose, develops very quickly, and begins to transform its surroundings.

That does not mean, of course, that once political, moral, or religious censorship vanishes, genius immediately flourishes. It only means that when freedom does not exist or is faint, human creativity shrinks and literature and art become poor.

Why was colonial literature in Latin America so clamorously mediocre that today we have to search very hard to find an author in those 300 years who deserves to be read? For every one Juana Ines de la Cruz or Inca Garcilaso de la Vega how many hundreds of indistinguishable poets and writers are there, abstruse chroniclers, incontinent dramatists without a single original idea? This literary scarcity is not gratuitous, nor can it be attributed to an intellectual deficiency common to our colonial versifiers. The compressing steamroller of ecclesiastic censorship prohibited and condemned the novel as impious. This prohibition of a literary form was a unique case in history. Every printed

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work was the victim of an obsessive scrutiny for signs of heterodoxy, and the literary occupation became a depersonalized and aseptic ritual in which spontaneity had been suppressed. This servitude left the creator no alternative but to direct his imagination towards formal ostentation. As personal thinking was risky, even suicidal, the writer had to comply in the world of ideas with all the topics and stereotypes of dogma, and to invest his creative drive in what was decorative and external. This explains the formal extravagancies, often remarkable, of this conformist and predictable art.

Freedom of creation does not guarantee genius: it is merely the propitious ground in which it can germinate. On the other hand, when freedom does not exist, it is unlikely that germination will take place, because in artistic creation the entire personality must intervene, consciousness and unconsciousness, rational light and irrational tumult, searching for the unknown. Only the artistic work that is born from human totality, and that implies moral audacity as well as skill, transcends time and place. This rarely happens in repressive cultures, be they religious or ideological, in which due to censorship or self-censorship the creator must exert a systematic rational vigilance over what he writes so as not to transgress the limits of tolerance.

Now, the fact that freedom has been the motor of social and material as well as intellectual progress must not make us forget the tribute of misfortunes that it has also imposed on man, for we must bear in mind the high cost we have to pay in order to preserve it. For only in situations dealing with liberty is the essential complexity of human actions so flagrant—never wholly positive or negative, good or bad, but relatively one or the other, in doses often very difficult to weigh.

In the economic field, the same liberty that has impelled progress is also the source of inequalities, and can open up huge chasms between those who have a lot and those who do not. The curiosity and inventiveness that it fuels has allowed man to tame illness, explore the abysses of the sea, of matter and the body, and, transgressing the law of gravity, to sail the skies. But it has also allowed him to devise weapons that make any modern state a potential trigger of the kind of devastations and holocaust that make the efforts of Nero, Genghis Khan, or Tamerlane seem like playground amusements.

This somber paradox should make us consider the different ways in which science and literature have evolved. It is only in the former that the notion of "progress" has a distinct and chronological sense: the progressive discovery of knowledge that made previous discoveries obsolete and which brought better living conditions for man and increased his domination of nature. The advance of science, however, while it was pushing away illness, ignorance, and scarcity, accentuated the vulnerability of existence through the perfection of weaponry.

There is a law here that admits of no exceptions. Each period of scientific apogee has been preceded by the development of military technology and has seen wars in which the slaughter also progressed according to the number of victims and efficiency of destruction. From the skull smashed by the primitive anthropoid to the annihilation of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, there is a long history in which scientific development seems unable to achieve an equivalent progress in moral behavior. Civilization appears as a bicephalic animal. One of the heads stretches out to the sky—idealistic, generous, the eyes fixed on a pacific goal, a healthier, happier, and more compassionate life. The other head skims the ground, ruminating projects of power at any price, including that of the most atrocious destruction. In the nuclear era this process has reached its limit.

Every notion of "progress" is questionable in literature. The *Divine Comedy* may be better or worse than the *Odyssey*, and a reader may prefer Joyce's *Ulysses* to *Don Quixote*. But no great literary work erases or impoverishes one which appeared ten centuries ago. That, though, is exactly what happens in the field of science, where chemistry abolished alchemy (or turned it into literature). The spirit of destruction, seemingly inherent in the creative ability of human beings, is not absent in literature. On the contrary, physical and moral violence are a permanent presence in poems, plays, and novels of all ages. The blood and corpses of the victims in literature are perhaps as numerous as those that would result from a nuclear apocalypse.

Only the artistic work that is born from human totality, and that implies moral audacity as well as skill, transcends time and place.

There is a difference, of course. If there is a nuclear war, the human game as we know it is over. On the other hand, literary devastations and bloody orgies have produced only shakes, thrills, and a few orgasms among readers.

What I am trying to say is that since there is no way of eradicating man's destructive drive, which is the price he pays for the faculty of invention, we should try to direct it towards books instead of gadgets. Literature can mitigate this drive without much risk. Maybe we should reconsider the impulse that turned science into the exclusive tool of progress, relegating poetry, stories, drama, and the novel to the secondary role of mere entertainment. Of course, literature is also a beautiful spell that provides us with some of that nourishment our desires long for in vain because we are condemned to want more than we have.

But literature is more than this. It is a reality where man can happily empty the obscure recesses of his spirit, giving free rein to his worst appetites, dreams, and obsessions, to those demons that go hand in hand with the angels inside him and which, if they were ever materialized, would make life impossible. In the ambiguous mist of literature, the spirit of destruction can operate with impunity, allow itself all the words, and at the same time it can be innocuous and even benign, thanks to the cathartic effect the meeting of secret devils has on a reader. Unlike scientific civilization, through which we have become more fragile than our ancestors were before they discovered fire and learned to fight the tiger, literary civilization produces men who are more impractical, passive, and dreamy. But such men would certainly be less dangerous to their fellowman than we have grown to be since our vote for the gadgets and vote against the book. ◁

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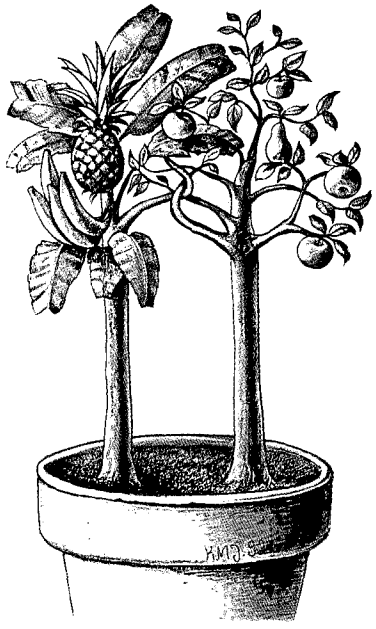
From El Paso to Plymouth

Hispanic Contributions to American Culture

by Richard Estrada



Krystyna Jachniewicz

Last November, a delegation of citizens from the far West Texas border city of El Paso made the long journey to Plymouth, Massachusetts. The purpose of the El Pasoans' visit was to challenge Plymouth's long-held—and nearly universally accepted—claim that it was the site of the first Thanksgiving to be held on what is now United States soil.

"*Al contrario,*" said the residents of El Paso. Instead of having taken place in Plymouth in 1620, the first Thanksgiving was held near El Paso 22 years previously, in 1598. Moreover, asserted the revisionists, the United States should honor a long-forgotten hero, Juan de Oñate, the leader of the caravan of brave Spanish settlers and conquistadores who not only celebrated the first American Thanksgiving but staged the first play ever performed on what is today American soil.

The historical mini-controversy soon fizzled out. But the story of Juan de Oñate and his expedition symbolizes an aspect of America's cultural identity that is destined to grow. As the contributions of Hispanics to North American history are brought into sharper focus, the United States has no choice but to ascertain who the Hispanics are. How did they get here, and how do they fit into the nation's consciousness? Inevitably, this leads to the question not only of assimilation, but of the real meaning of assimilation as the world moves in the direction of greater global integration.

No region of the country is as influenced by Hispanic culture as the Southwest. The history of the Spanish and their Hispanic-Indian descendants in the Southwest began with the wanderings of Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca. The survivor of a shipwreck in the Gulf of Mexico, Cabeza de Vaca—along with two companions, one of whom was a black Moor—walked across Texas and northern Mexico beginning in 1536. Soon after Cabeza de Vaca's return to Spanish civilization in northern New Spain (modern-day Mexico), the first Spanish expedition into today's Southwest occurred between 1540 and 1542 under the leadership of Francisco Vásquez de Coronado. Members of this expedition trekked over modern-day Arizona, New Mexico, and Kansas, and were the first Europeans ever to witness the spectacular beauty of the Grand Canyon. One of my best friends—an El Pasoan, it so happens—claims to be a descendant of a member of this expedition.

In the 17th century, Spain proceeded to establish settlements along a north-south corridor that includes modern-day El Paso, Texas (historically more a part of New Mexico and Chihuahua than of Texas), and Albuquerque and Santa Fe, New Mexico. In the 18th century, settlements such as San Antonio, San Diego, San Francisco, and Los Angeles were established in modern-day Texas and California. Roman Catholic proselytizing always attended Spanish political conquest. To the historian Herbert Eugene Bolton, the Southwest was, therefore, the "rim of Christendom."

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In 1807 the first meeting of the Anglo-American and Spanish cultures occurred when an expedition under the command of Zebulon Montgomery Pike was captured north of Santa Fe. Soon thereafter, fur trappers and traders began to make their way into the region, often converging on the village of Taos; and after Mexico won its independence from Spain in 1821, Anglo-American incursions metamorphosed into a highly prized trading relationship that made the Santa Fe Trail between New Mexico and Missouri a veritable bridge between Anglo and Hispanic America. Simultaneously, the Mexican government awarded Anglo-Americans in Texas grants to settle rich farmland. By 1836 they had revolted and won their war for independence.

For nearly a decade, Texas was an independent republic, but in 1845 it was annexed by the United States, an act that provoked war with Mexico. By 1848, the United States had prevailed and Mexico was forced to cede the greater part of what is today the U.S. Southwest. Significantly, at the time of the so-called "Mexican Cession," there were perhaps seventy-five thousand Mexican inhabitants in the entire region. Among those who remained were the ancestors of Mexican-Americans such as my friend who claims descent from a member of the old Coronado expedition. (When his son's Anglo-American girlfriend asked him a couple of years ago when his family had come to the United States, my friend correctly responded that it was the United States that had come to his family.) In point of fact, however, the ancestors of the majority of today's Mexican-American population, including my own, would not come to the Southwest until after it was a part of the United States.

In addition to place names, terms from the Spanish colonial period are either still used by inhabitants of the region or are so much a part of popular folklore that they have been fully assimilated into American culture. These include ranching terms such as *rodeo*, *mustang*, *lariat*, and *buckaroo*. Spanish terms such as *fiesta*, *siesta*, *fandango*, and, certainly, *adiós* are well-known to Anglo-Americans who do not speak Spanish. Mexican music performed by American and Mexican entertainers flood the airwaves of the Southwest. Walk in the plaza of El Paso or the streets of downtown San Antonio and you will likely hear far more Spanish than English. Whether painted by Anglo-Americans or Hispanic-Americans, art in the Southwest often has a pronounced Mexican flavor. Mexican food is one of the most popular ethnic cuisines not only in the Southwest but in the entire United States.

The Hispanic heritage lives on even in the law. As riparian, or water, law throughout the region is often based on custom, courts in the Southwest often demand to know the history of water usage in a given locale for centuries back, thus implicitly lending weight to Spanish law. Here and there, the 13th-century Spanish legal code known as *"la Ley de las Siete Partidas"* still plays a role in Southwestern jurisprudence. Those who would downplay these real and far-reaching contributions, and who persist in the notion that the Hispanics of the Southwest were little more than foils for John Wayne movies, are simply uninformed. Those who see danger in Hispanic culture before they see richness and a different kind of order are alarmist at best, bigoted or xenophobic at worst.

However, there is no denying that a certain danger does exist in the growing tendency to exalt the contributions of minority groups. Specifically, such an orientation inevitably runs the risk of disparaging the culture that has produced the majoritarian institutions that hold the nation together. There is in fact reason to be deeply concerned that from California to Texas the traditional notion of the melting pot is being increasingly sneered at today. Instead, ethnic activists, ethnic politicians, and their liberal and libertarian patrons increasingly employ metaphors about society and culture that stress separateness. For them, the United States is a "patchwork quilt," a "mosaic," a "salad bowl." Anything but innocuous, this assault on the supremacy of the melting pot metaphor translates into the exaltation of ethnicity over citizenship.

Fifteen years ago when I was a graduate student at a Midwestern university, the renowned English social historian E.J. Hobsbawm met with a small group of would-be historians on the occasion of one of his infrequent visits to this country. After fielding a few obligatory questions about his work on revolutions in Europe, he suddenly raised the issue of the growing presence of Hispanics in the United States. I can't remember his exact words, but his question went something like this: "What in the world is going on here?"

The answer, in a word, was "immigration." It is hardly coincidental that historical revisionism in the Hispanic community should coincide with one of the major demographic trends of our time, the massive rate of entry into the United States of Hispanic immigrants from all over Latin America. This phenomenon began in the latter 1960's and continues virtually unabated to this day. From the seventy-five thousand in the Southwest in 1848, the number of Hispanics has grown to approximately 23 million today. Though they come from all over Latin America, half or more are of Mexican descent.

However greater in importance the historical contributions of Hispanics and other ethnic groups may grow, the civic culture of the United States must remain largely Anglo-Saxon.

It is the numbers that are proving problematic, not the Hispanic-ness (or the Asian-ness) of the new immigration. Those who know their U.S. immigration history will recall that Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson both expressed concerns about the creation of large enclaves of non-English immigrants in the United States in the 18th century. Their fears arose not because the newcomers were not of English stock, per se, but because the immigrants' affinity for their own language and legal customs tended to impede assimilation, which in turn raised questions about separatism. The Founding Fathers' concerns over German immigration proved that racism per se need not be a motive in addressing such issues. In our own day, if francophone

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Quebec can bring the Canadian confederation to the brink of disintegration even though France lies an entire ocean away, should there not at least arise a certain reflectiveness about our own Southwest, which lies contiguous to an overpopulated Third World nation?

The inchoate fear that immigrants are not assimilating is not without a degree of justification. While rates of Hispanic assimilation are probably at an all-time high, so too is the expansion of an impoverished immigrant underclass. The dichotomy must not be overlooked or downplayed. Though its significance can in fact be exaggerated, the rioting begun by Salvadoran aliens in the Mount Pleasant neighborhood of Washington, D.C., in May 1991 certainly did nothing to assuage concerns over this phenomenon. If similar riots have not occurred in the Southwest, there is nonetheless a degree of dangerous, slow-motion alienation to be found in skyrocketing intra-ethnic gang fighting and other antisocial activity, particularly in California and Texas. The majoritarian community is certainly not free of such pathologies, but disproportionate levels of poverty tend to yield disproportionate levels of crime, and the fact remains that minorities are disproportionately poor.

Several million inhabitants of the Southwest today are not, in fact, citizens of this country. Whether or not they have attained legal status, the low rate of naturalization among Hispanics can hardly be said to nurture assimilation and national unity. The highly-skilled, well-paid worker on a temporary visa is one thing, but the increasing presence of vast numbers of low-skilled, low-income workers has in fact produced ethnic enclaves and socioeconomic and political alienation that can only yield resentment against the more prosperous majoritarian community over time. Consider that even immigrants and their first-generation children complain about "discrimination" today. Caught in the middle are those citizens of Hispanic origin who are trying to respect the unwritten covenant of full membership in the polity in return for learning English and respecting the civic culture of the country.

Today more than ever before, the American nation must draw the line between the inalienable right to enjoy a nonmajoritarian ethnic heritage and the tendency to exalt ethnicity to the point of discrediting certain or all aspects of the nation's civic culture, none of which is more important than the dominance of the English language in the conduct of public business. However greater in importance the historical contributions of Hispanics and other ethnic groups may grow, the civic culture of the United States must remain largely Anglo-Saxon. There is no inherent reason why Hispanics cannot or should not follow in the footsteps of previous generations of European immigrants of Nordic, Teutonic, and Mediterranean origin.

All Americans, including ethnic minorities, should support a color-blind, skill-based immigration policy because of the threat that faces the Southwest and the entire nation in its continued absence. The loss of the common glue that has held the nation together since the age of democratic revolutions in the 18th century would imply the disintegration of the republic itself. America would cease to be America. It would deteriorate into something else, something less desirable — not because its civic culture was no longer Anglo-Saxon, but because the erosion or toppling of that Anglo-Saxon civic culture would, in the context of a new pluralist paradigm based upon the exaltation of ethnicity above citizenship, dissolve the United States in a witch's brew of contending, chaotic regions. We would become balkanized.

It is at that point that one of the greatest ironies in world history would materialize: along with the demise of the Anglo-Saxon civic culture so often derided by those historical revisionists who are indifferent to or supportive of ever-greater levels of immigration to this country, America's long-standing and unparalleled attraction to the diverse cultures of the globe would have died as well. The nation's great and noble motto, "*E pluribus unum*" ("Out of many, one") will then have deteriorated into "Every tribe for itself."

In the end, instead of celebrating both the Thanksgiving of the English Pilgrims and that of the Spanish Conquistadores — with the understanding that the Anglo-Saxon civic culture of the nation must continue to reign supreme in the interests of stability and prosperity for everyone — each region of the former United States would then be free to celebrate only that event and those historical figures who reflected the dominant ethnicity of their region. (Instead of being taught both the glories of Shakespeare and those of Cervantes, students would be forced to learn one or the other.) Having reached that particular desideratum, the millions of inhabitants of the distinct nations in which Plymouth and El Paso would be located would have precious little for which to give thanks.

LIBERAL ARTS

KEEPING UP WITH THE JONESES

To keep pace with the "sexual revolution," China's Family Planning Commission has ordered production of 100 million additional condoms per year for a total of one billion. The commission received complaints that "10 free contraceptives a month for each adult no longer is adequate" for the "91 million Chinese [who] receive free birth control devices as part of their work benefits." A *Chicago Tribune* report last January attributed increased demand to "the nation's late-booming sexual revolution" of premarital, extramarital, and recreational sex "partly imported from Western culture."

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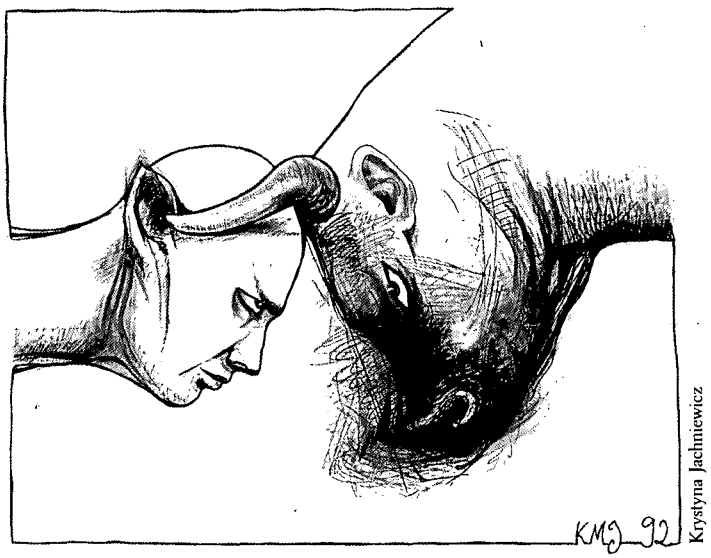
Blood at Eastertide

by Chilton Williamson, Jr.



Krystyna Jachniewicz

Europeans from Cortés to Graham Greene, and Americans from Ambrose Bierce to the contemporary tourist who is offered sugar-candy skulls to buy on the Day of the Dead and has his car stopped by men in anonymous uniforms toting guns, have discovered Mexico to be a country characterized by a ferocious reality that very often crosses over into the realm of the surreal. Mexican society, in unsettling contrast with that of the affluent Anglo colossus to the north, is distinguished chiefly by its medieval Christian piety (Catholicism tinctured, in some instances strongly, with aboriginal paganism) and by the irreducible circumstances of its material life. That the two qualities are joined cannot be doubted by anyone who has witnessed, for example, the celebration of the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe on the cathedral plaza in Ciudad Juárez, where men in rags gibber and weep before candle-lit statues of the recumbent Christ and a seemingly endless procession of the blind, the lame, and the halt raises the temperature of the cathedral itself by 20 degrees and fills it, like a gigantic stable, with a gentle animal reek. In Mexico, the spirit and the flesh are yoked in a reciprocity that seems scandalous to the Protestant Christian, outrageous to the northern rationalist, and sickening to the squeamish of both parties, none of whom is usually accustomed to being confronted by that vision of reality that seems peculiar to the Latin viewer, but that is nevertheless as true a one as any available to man on this earth.

* * *

From the bridge that spans the Rio Grande from El Paso, the pall of yellow smoke over Juárez was perceptible, and so was the odor of rotting garbage and rising sewers. But it was unexpectedly quiet on the Avenida Juárez on this Easter Sunday, following the excitement and joy of Holy Week. Along the nearly empty street a few merchants lounged in front of their shops, and the last black-and-white backs pressed in through the open doors of the Temple Bautista. On the plaza, Bach choruses were piped through loudspeakers but within the cathedral a quiet Easter Mass was being celebrated before what was much less than a full house. A driver in the taxi-line on the opposite side of the plaza, working with a clean towel that he applied to the automobile with swift caressing motions, polished a beat-up yellow-and-red Chevrolet with the name "Bertha" in hand-painted letters on the rear quarter-panel. An old man with a creased brown neck and face sat patiently in the head taxi. "*Al Plaza de Toros, por favor,*" Jim Rauen told him as we climbed in.

"*Monumental?*" the driver inquired as the engine turned over with a clanking uproar. "*Si, señor,*" Jim agreed, securing his walking stick with its carved ivory head between his knees.

The taxi went through narrow streets and wide ones, past pedestaled statues of defunct generals and forgotten politicians, and between rows of quiet middle-class houses and more expensive-looking ones with manicured lawns, carefully trimmed rose bushes, and shiny automobiles locked away behind iron fences secured by heavy padlocks. In a street so narrow that the driver had to slow almost to a crawl, a pair of policemen uniformed in brown stood impassively interrogating a hapless motorcyclist. At the end of the street, the taxi made a left turn into a six-lane avenue that passed directly before the Plaza Monumental, where gaudy posters plastered on a facade of brick arches read:

Plaza Monumental
Juárez, Domingo 15 Abril, 5:00 P.M.
Tradicional Corrida de Pascua
Mariano Ramos
Manolo Arruza
Alejandro Silveti

Chilton Williamson, Jr. is senior editor for books at Chronicles.

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6 San Miguel de Mimiahuapam 6
Plaza de Toros
Monumental Bull Ring

There were already a few cars in the parking lot up front by the red-and-yellow-painted gates and the ticket booths, one to the left and another to the right—*"Sol"* and *"Sombra"*—and people wandering behind these. Next to the parking lot was the Monumental Bar & Disco, with its doors propped open on the dark cool interior where the chairs rested legs-up on the tabletops. "Let's go have a look at those Mimiahuapam bulls," Jim Rauen—who lives in Belen, New Mexico, and is an *aficionado*—suggested.

The bulls waited in the holding pens directly to the left of the gate area. The pens were dry tanks made of bricks or cinder block, and they had stairs rising to the high promenades that surrounded the walls along their tops and were faced on the inside by a high iron grille. Through the grille, you looked down on the bulls, and they looked up at you. These bulls from the Mimiahuapam Ranch, like all fighting bulls, had never before witnessed a man standing at their own level; nor would they until they entered the ring for the first—and last—time. Upon an assurance of that fact depends not only the safety of the *matador*, but the art of the bullfight itself.

Around the promenade, fathers lifted small children on their shoulders to view the bulls, little girls in voluminous Easter dress stood on the toes of their patent-leather pumps to peer, and old men wearing straw hats and suspenders squinted, sizing up the animals and muttering to one another. There was sand spread on the floor of each tank, and each had a brick water trough, and *burladeros*—wooden shelters built out eight inches or so from the wall for the handlers to get behind if they needed to. In the first tank were a black, a brown, and a brindle bull. The bulls were in good flesh and had very sleek, shiny coats. The brindle, Jim observed, also had a slightly upturned point on its right horn. The bulls pressed together, smearing each other with their bright green manure, while the black pawed the ground and rolled his eyes upward to the promenade. As they stood their ground pawing, the yellow dust rose in clouds around them, lifted through the grille, and dispersed itself among the spectators. The three other of the six bulls to be killed that afternoon had been moved to adjoining tanks to prevent them from fighting one another. Everyone on the promenade, including the old men, appeared to be very pleased by the quality and the general aspect of these bulls.

We left the bulls and went through the red-and-yellow gates to attend the *sorteo*. On the other side of the gates, we were met by a brown old man dressed in a loose brown suit, a brown shirt with no necktie, a brown hat, and brown shoes who wanted to sell us tickets to the fight. When Jim explained that we had our tickets already and wished to see the *sorteo*, the man nodded affably and shuffled ahead of us under the concrete flair of the stadium bowl close to the holding pens where a sign on an inset yellow door said *Peligro*. Here beneath the overhang everything was crusted with pigeon droppings, including the folding metal chairs and tables where people sat drinking beer and waiting for the *sorteo* to take place. Among these were a party of Anglos, including a middle-aged couple from Midland, Texas; an elderly one from Denver who said they came every year for the Easter fight that begins the season; and a lady from Santa Fe in a long blue dress with heavy folds in it and eyeglasses, wearing her hair drawn back in a salt-and-pepper bun. This woman, who reminded me inevitably of the Old Lady in *Death in the Afternoon* whom Hemingway attempts to instruct in the art and morality of the bullfight, turned out to be a true *aficionada*. While we were talking, the *sorteo* was accomplished: after the names of the six bulls had been inscribed on six cigarette papers, the managers of the three *matadores* selected two papers apiece. The bulls whose names appeared on those papers were the bulls their men would fight that afternoon.

In the shaded angle between the pavement and the slope of tiered concrete, men unloaded cases of beer and *coca*, plunging the bottles neck-first into plastic pails filled with crushed ice. Behind them, through the dark tunnel the *puerta* made, a figure in the open yellow oval of the ring was watering the sand with a hose. With Bob Guidry, Monumental's public-relations man in El Paso, we drank beer and discussed the history of the stadium, which Guidry said was built in 1957 when nobody dreamed of the speed and extent of Juárez's future growth. Guidry explained that a decline in enthusiasm for the bullfight has occurred along the border with the United States and in northern Mexico generally, which is why fights are scheduled nowadays only on holiday Sundays between Easter and Labor Day. What he called "the fight of the decade" had taken place only the year before, he said, when *el Presidente* intervened to spare the bull's life. Such a thing happens with about one in every ten thousand bulls. A bull spared in this way, in recognition of his outstanding bravery, is put to stud so that he may pass on his brave genes to as considerable a progeny as possible.

The Monumental Bar & Disco was a shabby café open on three sides to make a *patio* where low tables, built of rough plywood tops held in iron bands and standing considerably off-plumb, were surrounded by a motley assortment of chairs. Beyond the café the disco yawned, a gray cavern, empty and dim. Children belonging to the Tarahumara Indian tribe sold candy and nuts from baskets, and between the tables a single waiter ran back and forth, gripping by the necks with grimy fingers uncapped bottles of beer.

Around four o'clock people began arriving in numbers by cars, pickup trucks, buses, and vans. Drinking beer with fresh lime slices, we watched a girl wearing a tight-fitting polka-dot dress and no underwear over a superb figure, and another girl, of a Spanish fairness and with a classic profile, dressed out in a complete going-to-the-bullfight costume: black-and-white hat with a flat crown and a stiff brim, a white blouse, black pants ending just above the knees, and a black-and-white pocketbook. Her husband was of a much darker Spanish type, almost swarthy; they had two small children with them. At a table near us an Anglo gentleman, silver-haired and florid, in a gray tweed coat with display handkerchief in the pocket above pressed charcoal slacks and tasseled loafers, sat cool and remote between two lovely blonde girls of 14 or 15. A *fiesta* atmosphere was beginning to develop, and somewhere behind us a band was playing *pasa dobles*—bullfight music. The parking lot and the

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Monumental Bar were extremely crowded now, and the day felt hotter than ever. At the service bar, boys with tongs were busy dragging in big blocks of sweating ice. A commercial bus stopped beside the bar to discharge passengers, while the people standing around took pictures.

At last Jim said it was time to go. We finished the beer and walked through the gates toward the stadium, where men were offering cushions for rent at 1,000 pesos, about forty cents. We paid for two cushions and entered through the nearest *puerta* to our places in the *barreras* (front-row seats) on the shady side of the ring, guided by the ubiquitous old man in brown to whom we gave a dollar. "Only one thing in Mexico ever starts on time," Jim remarked to me as we dropped the cushions on the *tendidos* (these are the numbered places around the concrete tiers) and sat on them, "and that is the bullfight. Other events, including business meetings, are frequently hours late. And I mean *hours*."

We were seated between an Anglo family on my right and, on Jim's left, an elderly Anglo pair. The girl directly beside me looked to be about ten years old; she sat licking a very large lollipop and appeared entirely unimpressed by the spectacle around her. Above and to our right was the presidential box (AUTORIDA), and lettered signs above the entrances honored the names of great artists of the bullfight: PUERTA JUAN BELMONTE, PUERTA FERMIN ESPINOZA, PUERTA JUAN SILVETI. In the *callejon* or corridor between ourselves and the *barrera*, which is the red-painted wooden fence that forms an inner boundary to the sanded ring, the radio broadcasters strutted, jabbering excitedly into their hand-held microphones.

Heralded by fanfares from the white-coated band above the president's box, the grand entry started—as Jim had predicted—precisely at five o'clock. Through a door under the sign CUADRILLAS the three *matadores* with their *banderilleros* came into the ring, followed by the *picador* on his padded horse and a young woman in a black satin costume mounted on a lively black one, its saddle and bridle trimmed with silver, which she made to prance sideways around the arena. The *matadores*—Ramos, Arruza, Silveti—looked to be of Caucasian blood: all three were very tall and slender, with aquiline features. Each carried on his arm a pink cape with a lemon-colored lining, which he proceeded to drape over the *barrera* directly under the president's box. When the grand entry was concluded and the girl in black had trotted her horse out of the ring, Arruza and Silveti retired and a man came with a rake and smoothed over the horses' tracks in the sand. Finally, Mariano Ramos was left alone with his *banderilleros*, all of them watching the entrance below the sign that said TORILES.

When the bull came out he carried a *divisa* (a sort of rosette tied in the breeder's colors that is stuck into the bull as he enters the ring) on the point of his right shoulder. He was the feisty black we had watched in the pen before lunch. For an instant he stood, not quite aghast but in astonishment, waiting to discover the meaning of this wholly unfamiliar situation. Then he began to charge around the ring, striking with his horn at the *burladeros* behind which the *banderilleros* had taken shelter; while they, from their refuge, watched to see which horn the bull favored to use and flaunted their capes at him to goad him into using it. You would see the flash of yellow-and-pink over the top of the *burladero*, and feel the impact as the bull struck the wood with his horn before continuing his charge. Several times he came to a halt against the *burladero*, and on these occasions the *banderillero* would put a hand over the wood to pat him gently on the nose while he talked to him, bull and man with their heads only inches apart. Ramos watched every one of the bull's moves intently. Then he signaled to the *picador*, who had been waiting just outside the ring.

Boos and hoots rose from the crowd as the *picador*—villain of the *suerte de varas* (trial of the lances), which is the first of the three acts (*los tres tercios de la lidia*) of the traditional bullfight—rode into the ring on his blindfolded horse, which was padded on its right side. The *picador* is a suspect character on two counts: first, it is he who initiates the process of breaking down the bull by weakening the *morillo* (the hump of muscle over the shoulders) so that he must eventually drop his head for the *estocada*, or killing thrust high up between the shoulders; second, the *picador*, who like the *banderilleros* works for the *matador*, takes his orders from his master regarding how hard to punish the bull with the lance (the sooner serious damage is done, the easier the *matador*'s job in the kill is going to be). The *picador* also was thickly padded on his right leg. He worked the blinded horse around to put its right flank against the bull, and then he made his thrust with the lance, leaning his weight on it so that the blade penetrated the *morillo* as far as the guard. "*Oh my God!*" the woman seated by Jim said.

The bull leaned into the horse, keeping his head turned along the padded flank, and stood quite still, as if he wished to cooperate in the maneuver. After what seemed a very long time, the *picador* twisted the lance free of the *morillo*; immediately the hot blood pumped from the wound like a small fountain and ran in slow red sheets down the shiny black withers while the crowd booed and hooted some more. "He overdid it on that one," Jim commented, looking intently at me under the brim of his Panama hat. "He's weakened him badly—way too early."

When Mariano Ramos came forward holding the cape in both hands and cited the bull, the bull appeared to be already lethargic. Five times Ramos passed the bull in front of his body, holding the cape just ahead of the horns and bringing them very close in. (These passes are called *veronicas*; they are named for St. Veronica, who wiped the face of Christ with a cloth as He was on the point of crucifixion and who is always depicted holding this cloth by two corners, in the manner of the *matador* with his cape.) Ramos completed his *veronicas*. Then he swirled the cape suddenly in the face of the oncoming bull and turned his back contemptuously upon its abrupt halt, in what is known as a *media-veronica*. (By his *veronicas*, the *matador* expects to tire the bull further and weaken his spinal column through forcing him into a series of quick unnatural turns.) Although Ramos's *veronicas* had been impressive enough to the inexperienced viewer, I could not tell whether he had succeeded in slowing the bull or not.

In the second act of the bullfight, things can happen too quickly for the untrained eye to catch and the brain to register and make sense of them. The *banderillas* are sticks with harpoon tips, about three feet long and furbished with

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colored ribbon; the *banderilleros'* job is to implant them in the *morillo*, thus weakening the muscle still further and causing the bull to drop his head even lower. Also, the *banderillas* are used to correct unwelcome tendencies in the bull's use of his horn. The speed with which the placement of the *banderillas*, in pairs, is accomplished is so great, and the audacity of the maneuver so much more so, as to numb the uncomprehending mind to everything but the unimaginable fact of it. As the bull, cited by a *banderillero*, charges him across the sand, a second *banderillero* intercepts the charge at an obtuse angle and, placing his feet close together, rises on his toes to thrust the *banderillas* home, one on each side of the *morillo* as high up as the *banderillero* can place them. Three times the black bull charged, and three times the shade—no more—of a *banderillero* flew athwart the animal's path and, reaching over the horns, placed the sticks in the wet red back with a brisk click of its slippered heels. "*Cervesa! Cervesa!*" the vendors cried from the *puertas*. Beer is sold in paper cups rather than in bottles or cans, which are outlawed lest they be tossed at the *matadores*. When the three pairs of *banderillas* had been set, the bull stood in his bright streaming blood, gaily beribboned. Then Ramos walked calmly over to the *barrera* where he took up the *muleta* and, facing upward to the president's box, asked for permission to kill the black bull.

The *muleta* is a stick with a spike at one end and a handle at the other, over which a piece of red cloth is draped. By the *muleta*, the *matador* guides the bull to his final weakness, then directs his head to that dropped position in which the vital spot between the bull's shoulders is exposed to the sword thrust. The black bull did not appear to require a lot of work with the *muleta* before Ramos, waiting with the *muleta* in one hand, received with the other hand the killing sword from one of his *banderilleros*. His back was toward us as he sighted along the sword to its down-curving point, and I could see that the bullfighter's traditional queue, or pigtail, was an artificial pin-on.

Ramos did not kill cleanly but had to thrust several times, going in over the horns at each attempt. In the first couple of attempts, the sword went in only part way and was expelled by the muscular pressure of the bull's breathing. At the last, it penetrated to the hilt. The black bull went down on his knees, stuck his muzzle in the sand, and rolled onto his back with his four legs in the air. The *puntillero* ran in and delivered a stroke with the *puntilla*, or dagger, to the back of the head just behind the horns. Then a team of blinkered mules wearing yellow-and-red head plumes was driven into the ring and the carcass was hitched to them and dragged out through the exit directly opposite the door by which the bull had entered the arena. When they had gone, the man with the rake came back and raked over all the blood and the long drag marks. The president did not bother to award Mariano Ramos an ear.

"Whatever you say," Jim warned me, "don't ever refer to bullfighting as a sport. *Aficionados* will be very offended."

When the second bull, Arruza's first, came into the ring he jumped the *barrera* and ran through the *callejon* before crossing back through the gate, while the radio broadcasters vaulted clear and the spectators in the *barreras* reared back on the *tendidos*. From his first appearance, everyone in the ring seemed scared of this bull, including Arruza. As he went under the cape in the first *veronica*, he demonstrated a peculiar hooking movement with his horn that Jim said was unpredictable and therefore extremely dangerous. Arruza was plainly taking care with the bull, but he placed his own *banderillas*, lightly and brilliantly. He placed two pairs of them, but with the *muleta* too he was cautious, and although the crowd was not enthusiastic about him, they did not seem ready to blame him either. Ernest Hemingway wrote: "Bullfighting is the only art in which the artist is in danger of death and in which the degree of brilliance in the performer is left to the fighter's honor."

When Silveti entered the ring his fans, holding a large blue-and-white banner—ADELANTE SILVETI—broke into loud cheers and shouts of applause. In fact, "*El Tigre de Guanajuato*," abetted by a good bull, delivered the first real performance of the afternoon. And Silveti was a performer to his fingertips. In his final *veronicas* he disdained even to look at the bull, and when he did face him he would glare, showing his teeth as he cited him—"Eh—*Eh*!"—and finally jerking his head back to toss his hat. When it was time for him to kill, he got in close and killed with a single stroke, receiving as he did so a strike on the right leg from the horn. It looked bad for him at first, but there was no blood and Silveti, still keeping his disdainful manner, limped across the ring to the *barrera* where, from beneath the president's box, he watched the bull in his death throes. The president awarded him both ears, and Silveti circumambulated the ring proceeded by two men carrying a banner warning that anyone caught throwing anything into the ring would be arrested; he was bombarded by cheers, and also by women throwing their shoes and hats. "You'd be amazed," Jim said, "the things women sometimes manage to get off themselves in public and throw to the *matador*. That was maybe not the greatest fight you could ever see, but it was on a par with what you'd see every day in Madrid or Pamplona or Mexico City."

By the fourth fight, in which Ramos met his second bull, I had observed that, contrary to tradition or bullfight lore or both, these bulls this afternoon were not taking *querencias* but fighting all over the ring instead. I observed also the incredible calm and patience of the horses, standing their ground stolidly under the great leaning weight of the bulls as the *picadors* thrust with their lances and turned them in the *morillo*. Ramos's second bull caught the horse with its protected right side against the *barrera* and hooked his head under its belly from the unprotected left. "*Don't look!*" the American cried to his daughter beside me, who had finished her lollipop and was drinking a soft drink in bored detachment. As the horse went down the *picador* came out of the saddle and rolled fast against the *barrera*, which he managed to leap over as the horse, weighed down by its equipage, struggled to its feet unhurt.

In spite of the excitement, Ramos's had not been a notable fight, but it was more than compensated for by Arruza with his second bull. With this bull, Arruza was making an obvious bid to rival Silveti in drama, as well as in artistry. In his finely executed cape work, he dropped on his knees and patted the bull's nose as he turned him—a cheap trick, perhaps, on the order of kissing the bull or taking the point of the horn in your mouth as bullfighters have been

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seen to do, but extremely impressive to the neophyte spectator. When Arruza had to kill, he did so with the second thrust but very neatly, so that the bull dropped as if poleaxed, spouting an eruption of blood from the mouth that should have emptied him completely before he reached his knees in the sand, and rolled onto his back with his legs up and the life fading visibly from his great dark eyes. It was a fine kill and the president awarded Arruza both ears, which he paraded around the ring before tossing them to his fans.

Bullfighters have egos unmatched except by those of opera singers, and so Silveti must have been anticipating a brave bull—or anyway a bull on rails, as *aficionados* say—for his second bull, the brindle we had seen earlier in the pen. But this bull was not on rails, he was off them completely—meaning that nothing that he did, the way he used his horns or charged or in any way conducted himself, was in the least predictable. This type of bull is of all bulls the most dangerous to the *matador* and to his men, and the strain of dealing with the brindle must have worn badly on Silveti in the first two acts of the fight, so that when he had to kill he found that he could not do it properly: perhaps he had become afraid to go in over the horns of this bull. He stood just as Mariano Ramos had stood, with his back turned directly to us, so that I, with him, sighted along his outstretched arm to the turned-down sword's point. When Silveti went in to kill, I felt almost that I was dealing the *estocada* myself.

The sword penetrated to the hilt, but the bull did not drop. Silveti stepped away from the bull and faced up to the band above the president's box. "*Musica, musica!*" he cried. The musicians obliged, but the crowd drowned them out. "*Toro! Toro!*" the people shouted, as if their sympathy had been transferred suddenly from the man to the bull that man was trying to kill.

Silveti went in again with the sword and this time the bull charged him, knocking him down in the sand where he disappeared under the trampling brindle body as it struck with its horns at the human figure pinned directly beneath it. The *banderilleros* rushed in swirling their capes, and then Silveti was free of the bull and on his feet again, making furious gestures and exclaiming loudly as he caught up his sword from the sand. Already cushions were spinning down and plopping around him, while the stadium echoed with the boos and catcalls that had been added to the groans, and finally the bellowing, of the mortally wounded bull. Silveti had that fierce expression on his face that he had had with his first bull and he was showing his teeth again, but in true anger this time; his handsome blue-and-gold costume was covered with blood. He kicked a cushion out of his way as he brought up the sword and sighted along its quicksilver length. Even as he went in the air was thick with cushions once more, and all around the ring people were getting up and leaving. The *puntillero* ran in with the knife and Silveti struck with it unsuccessfully before he seized the sword again and jammed it between the brindled shoulders. At last, with heaving bellows, the bull collapsed in the sand and rolled in his little blood, the upturned point of his right horn gleaming in the evening light. It was the same strangely deflected point Jim and I had noted when we visited the pens many hours before.

"That horn," Jim said as we stood from the *tendidos* and reached behind ourselves for the cushions, "is probably all that kept that guy from being gored to death this afternoon."

* * *

On our way from the bullring, we became engulfed in the tide of eighty-five hundred departing spectators among whom the *matadores* were driven slowly by their chauffeurs. They sat with grim and fixed expressions, staring at their laps except when they gave the driver the order to stop and wrote autographs through the rolled-down windows. In the middle of the confusion two or three taxi cabs began backing among the crowd, and suddenly Jim shouted to me, "It's a pickpocket scam!" The drivers of the taxis were pushing people like cattle toward the Monumental Bar, and I felt a tug at the sleeve of the jacket I carried over my arm. The ringleader was obvious enough when you caught on to what was happening: a dark, stoutish, and highly unpleasant-looking man. Jim had begun to scowl but we did not dare to react aggressively in the middle of that Juárez crowd, which we escaped as quickly as we could to flag a waiting taxi on the boulevard. The driver wore a Chico Marx hat and in almost every other way resembled Chico himself. A large die in black-and-white hung by a cord from the rearview mirror.

"*Cuánto cuesta al puente avenida Juárez?*" Jim asked him as soon as we were inside the taxi.

"Five dollars each person."

Five dollars was what we had paid coming out for two people. "No, no," Jim told him. "Five dollars for *two* people!"

"Oke," the driver agreed cheerfully; "—for two!" But we didn't go anywhere.

"What seems to be the problem?" Jim asked the driver at last.

"No problem, *señor*. I am only waiting for more people."

"For God's sake, man," Jim exclaimed. "Take us to the bridge, can't you? You can come back here and get all the fares you want."

"Oke," the driver explained, starting the engine.

He drove very fast, not stopping for the ALTO signs and plunging precipitously into a one-way street that did not happen to be going our way, as the black-and-white die danced and spun from the rearview mirror. Jim's face during the trip was difficult to read. When we reached the bridge the driver put his foot down hard on the brake before turning to regard us across the seat-back with a wide grin of self-approval. "Here is bridge. You want anything else? You want to get drunk? You want some p---y?"

We paid him the five dollars and walked on to the bridge, sidestepping the teenage whores as we went. Already the wetbacks were taking to the river on inner tubes with boards placed across them for seats, and ahead of us the lights of the El Paso skyscrapers flared through the smog and the blowing dust, while in memory I heard again the cry uprolling from eight and a half thousand throats: "*Olé! Olé! Toro! Toro!*" In the bullfight, the bull has nobility conferred upon him because, for all his strength, courage, and endurance, he can never be a man; as, in the bullfight also, the man, for all his skill, control, bravery, and grace, can never be a god. Only a very spiritual and essentially realistic people, it seemed to me, could ever have appreciated and developed the art and ritual of bullfighting.

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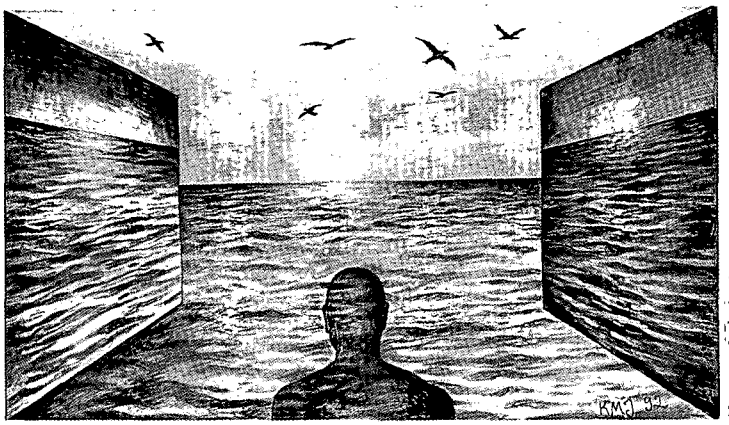
Poems by Jorge Luis Borges

Translated by Robert Mezey



Krystyna Jachniewicz

Texas

Here too. Here, as on the other unfurling
Frontier of the continent, the great
Prairie where a solitary cry fades out;
Here too the lariat, the Indian, the yearling.
Here too the secretive and unseen bird
That over the clamorous strains of history
Sings for one evening and its memory;
Here too the mystic alphabet, the word
Of stars which dictate to my cursive flow
Names that the days on their labyrinthine way
Will leave behind them: San Jacinto, say,
Or that other Thermopylae, the Alamo.
Here too that unknown, brief,
Needy and fretful commotion, life.

Melville

Always around him was the ancestral sea,
Sea of the Saxons, those who called it *whale-road,*
By which they coupled two enormous things,
The whale and the vast sea it vastly ploughs.
The sea belonged to him. And when his eyes
Beheld on the high seas the walls of water,
He had already longed for and possessed them
In that collateral sea which is the Scriptures
Or in the misty profile of the archetypes.
As man, he gave himself to the seven seas
And to the long, exhausting days and nights
And knew the harpoon crimsoned by Leviathan,
The brindled sands, the night smells and the dawn smells,
And the horizon where Chance lies in wait,
And then the exultation of being brave,
And, at the end, the joy of spying Ithaca.

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Conqueror of the sea, he trod the solid
Land which is the root of mountain ranges,
Motionless in time, a sleeping compass,
And over which he notes an uncertain route.
In the hereditary shade of orchards,
Melville crosses the evenings of New England
But sea inhabits him. It is the shame
Of the mutilated captain of the *Pequod*,
The untranslatable ocean and its tempests
And the abomination of that whiteness.
It is the great book. It is azure Proteus.

John 1:14

Some Islamic histories have the story
Of a certain king in the East, who, victimized
By boring splendor, went out in disguise
And by himself to wander the poor quarter

And lose himself amidst the crush of people
Whose hands were rough and names soon forgotten.
Today, like that Emir Haroun al-Rashid,
God desires to walk among the humble

And so he suckles at a mother's breast,
Just like those kin that crumble into dust,
So the whole globe shall be conveyed to him,

Air, water, morning, lily, stone and bread,
And after that the bloody martyrdom,
The mockery, the lash, the nails, the wood.

Adam Is Your Ashes

The sword will perish like the sprig of flowers.
Crystal is no more breakable than rock.
Things are their own destiny of dust.
Iron is corrosion. The voice, echo.
Adam, the youthful father, is your ashes.
The last garden will presently be the first.
The nightingale and Pindar are but voices.
The dawn is the reflection of the sunset.
The Mycenaean is the golden mask.
The towering rampart is the broken wall.
Urquiza, what the daggers leave behind.
The face that eyes the same face in the mirror
Is not yesterday's face. The night has eaten it.
Time, delicate time, is shaping us.

What luck to be the invulnerable water
That flows in Heraclitus' parable,
Or the intricacies of fire,—but just now,
In this long day that seems not to be passing,
I feel myself both durable and decrepit.

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An Empirical Jean-Jacques Rousseau

by Peter J. Stanlis

"Man was made of social earth."
—R.W. Emerson

Krystyna Jachniewicz

The Noble Savage: Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 1754-1762
by Maurice Cranston
Chicago: University of Chicago Press; 399 pp., $29.95

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Ever since Frederika MacDonald published her massive two-volume work, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau: A New Study in Criticism* (1905), scholars favorably disposed toward Rousseau have pursued the difficult task of rehabilitating him from the "audacious historical fraud" perpetuated by Frédéric-Melchior Grimm, Denis Diderot, and Mme. d'Épinay. On the authority of Grimm's malicious *Correspondance Littéraire* (1812), and Mme. d'Épinay's deliberately doctored *Memoirs* (1818), during the entire 19th century and well into the 20th, the public image of Rousseau was that of an emotionally unstable and repulsive personality and a moral cretin. Voltaire's intense contempt for Rousseau, generally attributed to envy, together with harsh personal criticism by other *philosophes*, contributed to this wholly negative portrait of Rousseau. Also, even before the conspiracies to defame him became public, his *Confessions* provided much added credence among traditional conservatives to the common belief that his psyche was deranged. The long tradition, which stretched from Samuel Johnson and Edmund Burke to Irving Babbitt, confirmed the widely held conviction that there were reptiles swarming in Rousseau's Eden-like image of primitive, idyllic nature.

Contemporary biographers such as Jean Guéhenno, Lester Crocker, Ronald Grimsley, and Jean Starobinski were often compelled to wrestle more with Rousseau's troubled psyche than with the empirical facts of his life. They have often exonerated him from some of the most negative mythological strictures made against him, but sometimes unwittingly they have also confirmed much that his Enlightenment and conservative critics have contended. An added difficulty was created by biographical scholars in the history of ideas, who often carried the negative portrait of Rousseau's character and personality into their exposition of his philosophical ideas on politics, society, religion, education, and human nature. Frequently they condemned his philosophy as false and pernicious because they perceived it as a mere extension of his unbalanced mind and sensibility. In her *apologia* of Rousseau, MacDonald committed the same error in reverse: "Rousseau's private life was an example, in an artificial age, of sincerity, independence, sim-

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plicity, and disinterested devotion to great principles; and . . . his virtuous character and impressive personality lent authority to his writings." Recently, this line of reasoning was carried to its *reductio ad absurdum* by Christopher Kelly in *Rousseau's Exemplary Life* (1987). Although MacDonald's sources for the empirical facts of that life were severely limited, she claimed that all scholars who deal with the biographical facts and writings, and avoid the pejorative myths, admire Rousseau, and that only those who ignore or despise historical facts calumniate him and his philosophy, and cast both to the dogs.

Maurice Cranston's biography, utilizing manuscript sources far beyond those employed by MacDonald and other biographers, is perhaps best perceived as a judicious, prudent, empirically objective, and thoroughly poised scholarly work in the long tradition begun by MacDonald of rehabilitating Rousseau. His first volume, *Jean-Jacques: The Early Life and Work of Jean-Jacques Rousseau* (1983), covered the formative years of his subject's life up to age 42, from 1712 to 1754. It was almost universally acclaimed as an outstanding achievement in biography, particularly for its perceptive insights into Rousseau's life and in its judicious but brief treatment of such early important works as *Discours sur les sciences et les arts* and *Discours sur l'origine et les fondements de l'inégalité*. Cranston based his work on the magnificent edition of Rousseau's correspondence, edited by the late Professor Ralph Leigh, and on original manuscript sources in Geneva, Neuchâtel, Paris, Savoy, Turin, Oxford, and many other research centers. His stated objective was to reverse the habit of writing biographies of Rousseau based upon published books and "printed folklore." His basic method was to deal as completely as possible exclusively with empirical and historical facts, to be wholly descriptive, and to omit emotive responses and normative moral or intellectual judgments regarding Rousseau's character, temperament, philosophy, and historical significance by setting forth the evidence in a straightforward chronological manner. To this end he correlated the facts of his subject's life and works with the account presented in the *Confessions*, noting where Rousseau's statements were confirmed, qualified, or contradicted.

Cranston extends his "Lockean biography" in volume two, and utilizes the same manuscript sources and neutral empirical method so evident in the first volume. He covers the vital years 1754-1762, when Rousseau wrote and published such important works as *Lettre à m. d'Alembert, Julie ou La nouvelle Héloïse, Émile*, and *Contrat social*. Cranston's empirical approach to Rousseau's life and works has the great virtues, and also the inevitable limitations, of all positivist descriptive scholarship in the humanities.

Its greatest strength lies in the firm foundation of its concrete historical facts. Perhaps its chief negative merit is that it almost wholly avoids every kind of subjective, doctrinaire, or ideological basis, theory, or interpretation for or against Rousseau. Judgments are left up to each reader. Cranston is about as far removed as any biographer can be from the solipsistic anarchy of a reductionist account of Rousseau's life and philosophy. Beyond noting some intellectual inconsistencies, he refuses to pass judgment on Rousseau, so that although he clearly admires much about Rousseau, his subject is pictured largely without blame or praise. Cranston is too careful a scholar to make imprudently dubious correlations between Rousseau's autobiography and his politics, so that unlike Christopher Kelly's *Rousseau's Exemplary Life* he avoids the crude error of reading Rousseau's *Confessions* as political theory or practice. The whole spirit of his study differs in every way both from past pejorative scholarly commentaries and from the eulogistic encomium that characterizes Kelly's biographical-political panegyric.

Only once does Cranston digress significantly from his empirical-descriptive method. The great knowledge, understanding, and skills he acquired during his long career as a distinguished teacher of political philosophy at the London School of Economics and elsewhere are very evident in the chapter "Two Social Contracts," where in some detail he analyzes Rousseau's *Social Contract*. He compares Rousseau and Hobbes for similarities and differences regarding the fictional precivil "state of nature," the hypothetical primitive state from which men supposedly formed the original "social contract." As compared to the social compacts of the Old Testament in the Decalogue and the covenant of 1620 of the Puritan colonists of New England, Cranston writes: "Rousseau's social contracts are less specifically historical events." In truth, Rousseau's social contracts are not historical at all, but purely speculative fictions. Rousseau himself admitted that men know nothing of the state of nature, not even whether such a state ever existed. He then proceeds to argue as though it had an actual historical existence, and Cranston, like all scholars favorably disposed to Rousseau, gives serious credence to his hypothetical premises and endows the precivil state of nature with historical significance. In contrast, Edmund Burke refused to accept Rousseau's fiction as a historical fact, or even as a metaphorical hypothesis, and held that it is necessary to draw a veil over the unknown prehistorical origins of government. Burke held that it is preposterous to ignore totally the known actual history and culture of Europe, from the ancient classical world of Greece and Rome, and what he called "the Christian commonwealth of Europe," and to substitute for the empirical facts of known history the purely imaginary, speculative fictions of Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau.

As Orestes Brownson noted in 1865 in *The American Republic*, it is an empirical fact that no nation ever came into existence out of a social contract formed by men living in a state of nature. All such social contract theories, Brownson argued, are false to historical fact, false to human nature, and therefore false to any valid political philosophy. The precivil "state of nature" is best dismissed as a wild figment of speculative imagination, a mere fictional abstraction that has no existence in the world of reality. The total historical inheritance of Western civilization, and not any ideological speculative theory, was the only safe and sane source for political and social philosophy.

Cranston admits that there is no "instinct" in human nature to form or support Rousseau's supposed social contract. Rousseau's own belief in the radical, self-contained individualism of

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primitive man also militates against the possibility of forming such a social contract. In total contrast to Aristotle and Burke, Rousseau denied that civil society and its institutions are "natural" to man; he believed that organized society is "artificial." He would have wholly rejected Burke's aphorism, "Art is man's nature," and its derivative argument that "the state of civil society . . . is a state of nature—and much more truly so than a savage and incoherent mode of life." But to understand Rousseau's *Social Contract* it is necessary to see it in the light of his earlier work, the *Discourse on Inequality*.

Rousseau had made it plain that he conceived the original "social contract" as a colossal fraud, because the division of labor in primitive society had led to inequities through private property, and to a rigid class structure that perpetuated injustice and conflicts between the rich and the poor. Inequality in economic and social conditions was to Rousseau the source of every evil. He argued that society corrupts men by destroying the *amour de soi-même* found in "nature," converting it into *amour-propre*, the desire in society to dominate others. Thus he claimed that civil society, not weaknesses inherent in human nature, causes such vices as pride, envy, avarice, vanity, etc. He assumed that the economic pie could not be enlarged, so that the wealth of the rich was to him the cause of the poverty of the poor. From this assumption he wrote to Mme. de Francueil and defended his decision, beginning in 1746, to put his five illegitimate children in an orphanage at birth: "The earth produces enough for everybody; it is the life-style of the rich, it is your life-style which robs my children of bread." Fifteen years later, in 1761, when Rousseau was sick and thought he was about to die, his troubled conscience caused him to have a search made in the foundling hospital records in Paris, but nothing was discovered regarding his children. Rousseau's social contract with his own children was indeed a colossal fraud.

Cranston notes that Rousseau's *Social Contract* "was to prove far more explosive, far more subversive of the Ancien Régime than anything Voltaire wrote." This is quite true. Rousseau's revolutionary political treatise presents the second of what Cranston calls "two social contracts." It was written out of Rousseau's belief that he was uniquely chosen by God or Nature to redeem humanity from the injustices and slavery of the "original" social contract that had been perverted by rulers throughout history. To the pure all things are poor. The important Calvinist residue in Rousseau's conscience and spirit reveals itself in his conviction that compared with the unregenerate mass of humanity he is one of God's elect, not in religion but in politics, and that he possesses from his self-generated inner light unique political revelations that are vital for the salvation of mankind. Cranston notes the explicit substantive similarities in political ideas between Rousseau, Hobbes, and Machiavelli, but mentions nothing of the more important assumed Calvinist psychology in his *Social Contract*.

With fine analytical skill Cranston explicates Rousseau's *Social Contract* and gives due consideration to some of the chief weaknesses in its thesis. He is not troubled by Rousseau's idea that the state can force a man to be free, and he denies that this idea can be equated with modern totalitarianism, as claimed by J.L. Talmon, Lester Crocker, and others. Yet recent scholarship on Rousseau by Norman Hampson, James Miller, and especially Carol Blum strengthens the interpretation of Talmon and Crocker. Cranston is well aware of Rousseau's great difficulty (Jacques Maritain said the impossibility) in attempting to harmonize the various particular interests, and individual wills and "rights" of private citizens and corporate bodies, with his "General Will" or *volonté générale*, which determines sovereignty in the national community. Among Rousseau scholars the range of interpretations of what he meant by *volonté générale* is almost as broad as the number of scholars, and Cranston adds nothing original to our understanding of this grand, abstract concept. Like Hobbes, Rousseau reduced the Church to a department of the state and identified religion with patriotism. Like practically all Rousseau scholars, Cranston is acutely embarrassed by what he calls Rousseau's "most astonishing chapter" on civil religion. The man of feeling explicitly advocates religious persecution, and his doctrine is very similar to the Civil Constitution of the Clergy adopted by the Jacobins during the French Revolution in July 1790. Rousseau's theory, like the practice of the Jacobins, banishes from the nation anyone who rejects the civic religious patriotism of the new order, and sanctions "punishment by death" for any citizen who acts as if he does not believe in its patriotic articles of faith.

Although Cranston makes as good a positive case for Rousseau's political theory as any scholar since C.E. Vaughan, in the final analysis he comes to his conclusions by minimizing the great difficulties embedded in Rousseau's original conditional premises and in his abstractions, ambiguities, paradoxes, and contradictions. Early in the 20th century, Gustav Lanson said that Rousseau is rife with contradictions and that his most sophisticated and clever scholars have not been able to harmonize his thought. This still appears to be true. Cranston achieves a certain degree of unity by ignoring the more dubious elements in Rousseau's theory. For example, he says nothing about the chief function of Rousseau's lawgiver, the "legislator" who, like Lenin, would change human nature by annihilating each individual's "natural resources" in order to form the new character of a good citizen in Rousseau's republic of virtue. The model of his republic is an idealized image of Calvin's Geneva mated with the discipline of ancient Sparta. It is generally supposed that in his *Social Contract* Rousseau regarded himself as the true lawgiver to his proposed regenerated social order. However that may be in abstract theory, in concrete practice during the French Revolution the Abbé Sieyès, Robespierre, and Marat each separately assumed that he was Rousseau's lawgiver for the regenerated social order of revolutionary France. But of course, in practice, the final true lawgiver of revolutionary France was Napoleon Bonaparte.

In a way, Cranston recognizes that Rousseau's aesthetic and moral sensibility is even more important than his political one. He notes that in 1761, when Rousseau published *Julie*, the novel "transformed Rousseau from a

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celebrated author into the object of a cult. . . . *Julie* . . . established him as a dominant figure in European culture. It changed the ways in which people thought and felt and acted." Precisely so, which is why between 1761 and 1780, 50 books in France imitated *Julie* and 72 editions of Rousseau's novel appeared before 1800. "Sensibility" is of paramount importance in the 18th-century, and although Rousseau did not originate the ethics of feeling, his vital role in spreading it throughout Europe is a necessary part of his intellectual and moral biography. Cranston's three brief sentences on Rousseau's novel are hardly an adequate treatment of this sensibility. Undoubtedly, a "Lockean biography" cannot handle such a complex psychological subject, which would carry us into the intellectual and moral domain in the history of ideas during the 18th century.

Other important subjects involving both Rousseau's private life and social theories are also omitted because they lie outside of Cranston's self-imposed empirical-rational method. Indeed, everything that makes Rousseau controversial as a person and thinker is left unresolved. For example, the enormous gap remains fixed between how Rousseau perceived himself and how he is viewed by his admirers, in contrast to how his enemies saw him in his own time, and critics up to the present have understood him. Perhaps no writer surpassed Rousseau in the art of converting good friends into lifelong bitter enemies. While they were still friends he wrote to Grimm: "As for kindnesses, I do not like them, I do not want them, and I do not feel grateful to those who force me to accept them." Rousseau never distinguished between patronage and benevolent friendship, and therefore treated gratitude for favors not as a social virtue but as a moral vice. He was quite ambivalent in accepting, yet resenting, generous assistance from Mme. d'Epinay and others, while indignantly scorning smaller gifts from them. Such behavior creates problems for his defenders, who perceive him as a man of integrity, independence, and firm adherence to principle. It also provides an opening for his critics, who find at the core of his exalted, abstract moralism a bleak epicurean and self-righteous nihilism and vanity: in short, a psychotic personality. Which view of Rousseau is valid? Empirical biographical facts alone do not answer that vital question.

One final ironic touch is worth noting. During the 18th and 19th centuries, critics of Rousseau often accused him of being a "primitivist." Two of his early 20th-century defenders, Ernest Hunter Wright and Arthur O. Lovejoy, among others, defended Rousseau from this charge. Cranston calls his biography *The Noble Savage*, which infers that "primitivism" is no longer perceived as a pejorative term. But Rousseau was not so much a primitive noble savage as he was a hermit living occasionally a rural life within the polished institutions of European civilization. He strongly resented Diderot's remark that only an evil man needed to live apart from society, because he regarded himself as the embodiment of his doctrine that man is by nature good, and that only organized society is evil. ◈

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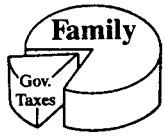

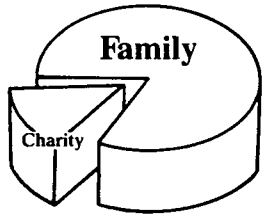

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Faith of Our Fathers

by Marion Montgomery

"What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honor."

—Psalm 8:4-5

A Government of Laws: Political Theory, Religion, and the American Founding
by Ellis Sandoz
Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press; 259 pp., $37.50

Political Sermons of the American Founding Era: 1730-1805
Edited by Ellis Sandoz
Indianapolis: Liberty Press; 1,596 pp., $38.00

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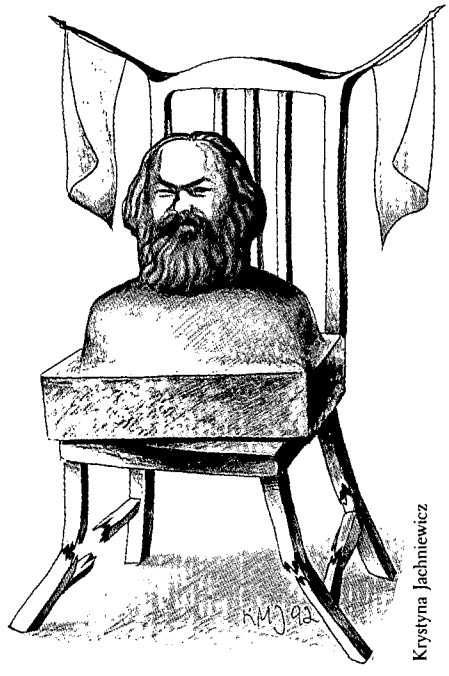

Krystyna Jachniewicz

Ellis Sandoz's new book is of such importance to us in our intellectually disoriented day as to require, not a "review," but an essay commendatory. As valuable as descriptive summary reviews, with requisite caveats, may be, they have the disadvantage of giving a reader the illusion of having read the book itself, wherefrom he moves on to the next review, feeling knowledgeable but lacking that advance of intellect called understanding. What is important in this instance is the author's manner of address, out of a long apprenticeship in service to the word. The matter addressed is important, but insofar as it appears summarized in the title, that matter may appear merely topical, suited to a review in the ordinary sense of that vocational undertaking. Put another way, Professor Sandoz's *A Government of Laws* deepens and puts in a larger perspective the intellectual origins of the Constitution as presented by Forrest McDonald in *Novus Ordo Seclorum*, anchoring the intellectual origins of the Constitution more firmly in Western tradition.

As for his devoted service to the word as scholar, there is the present instance of his *Political Sermons of the American Founding Era*, a collection of published sermons "from the onset of the Great Awakening to the beginning of the Second Awakening and Thomas Jefferson's second administration." Each sermon is complete and prefaced by a succinct biography of the preacher. The principal of selection is the political concern of the author as viewed from his religious perspective. The volume represents religious patriots, largely from New England, for whom the religious ground to political order is paramount. Professor Sandoz's foreword sets that perspective, and the collection provides evidence of a general concern in the colonial populace that the new nation be founded "under God."

More to our concern for the larger vision upon the founding supplied by *A Government of Laws*, we remember Professor Sandoz's *Political Apocalypse: A Study of Dostoevsky's Grand Inquisitor* (1971), which evidences the rare facility of seeing a literary text in its philosophical and historical and religious context. There are also his *Voegelinian Revolution: A Biographical Introduction* (1981) and more recently, through his mediation, Voegelin's own *Autobiographical Reflections* (1989). Sandoz continues as professor of political science at LSU, where he is also director of the Eric Voegelin Institute for American Renaissance Studies, which is engaged in the publication of Voegelin's *Collected Works* in 34 volumes. Such is the intellectual milieu within which Professor Sandoz lives and breathes and has his being, and out of which he moves, through knowledge acquired, to an understanding of the known, and in pursuit of wisdom. It is the concern for wisdom beyond knowledge and understanding that the present work recalls to us.

It does so by exhaustive documentation and explication of the intellectual roots that the principal Founders of our republic not only shared, but knew they shared. Out of that inheritance, they labored to reconcile differences among themselves, but always with a piety toward that inherited intellectual tradition, a piety that our present political intellectuals find it popular to reject. Professor Sandoz demonstrates, for instance, a fundamental influence upon the Founders' thinking of classical philosophy and Christian theology. The importance of these influences on the emerging consensus of the Founding Fathers underlies those monuments to political thought: the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, the Bill of Rights. *A Government of Laws* shows this with such authority that it may no longer be neglected or irresponsibly denied, as has become the habit of our intellectual conduct toward the founding in scholarly and popular thought by the end of this, our second century as a republic.

Marion Montgomery is the author of many books, including most recently Liberal Arts and Community *and* The Men I Have Chosen for Fathers.

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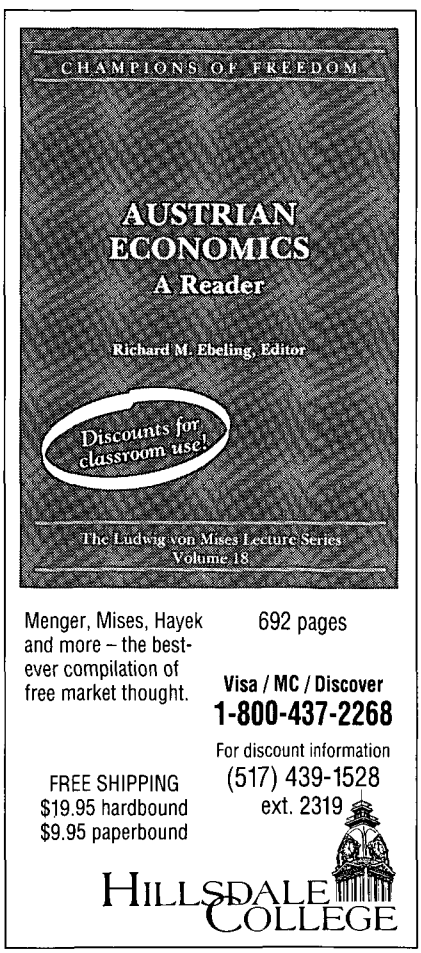
Being attentive to the realities of human existence as adumbrated by traditional classical and Christian philosophy and theology, the Founding Fathers were wise enough to moderate the recent political theories entangled with Hobbesian and Humean and Lockean ideas. The Greek philosophers, the Stoics, Hebrew thought, and especially Christian thought from the Apostles to Thomas Aquinas, contributed to the intellectual climate from which the founding of a new republic emerged. It is Christian thought as formatively important that is of special interest, since that is an "influence" aggressively rejected or decried by modernist thought. Concerning his recovery of this intellectual dimension of "Americanism" (Jefferson's term), Professor Sandoz describes his own intent: "The thrust of the inquiry is theoretical rather than antiquarian or simply historical." This is to say that the thrust is philosophical, and such an address is so easily dismissed on the grounds of being — with a pejorative twist to the terms — merely theoretical or speculative. But against our increasingly blind pursuit of the empirically pragmatic, we need to confront that dismissive attitude, which is too commonly determinate in academic attention to the founding.

The presumption of political science as a "science," the belief that statistical deposit is itself sufficiently descriptive of reality as to make abstractions the basis of political action, needs severe questioning. We might begin by observing that A *Government of Laws* contributes to the recovery of the good name of political philosophy, following in the tradition of Professor Sandoz's mentor Eric Voegelin, especially as it is reflected in that seminal work, *The New Science of Politics*. What is "new" in Voegelin's book is really old: a recovery of philosophical discipline to the subject. For as Sandoz and Voegelin recognize, any academic discipline divorced from its proper ground in philosophy easily suffers the imposition of agendas by popular pressures occasioned by circumstance. At first utopian in their enthusiasm, social concerns since the founding have become more and more desperate under the necessity of staying whatever social chaos springs from the pretense that reality itself is born of utopian enthusiasm. Through statistical abstractionism, for instance, political "science" in its academic manifestation has attempted to restructure political systems, declaring by the fiat of "fact" gathered by survey those false realities that now plague academic participation in the restoration of our disintegrating political community. At this juncture, typically, the "political system" in one way or another funds those political "scientists" in their increasingly forlorn hope that some additional systematization may prevent the collapse of social order, or at least delay that collapse for as long as another term of public office. Meanwhile family, community, and the larger polity disintegrate from factionalism. We have witnessed the effect of this discipline pretending to be a formal "science," its reductionism requiring a turning from the elementary grammar of common sense through abstractionism elevated over reality. Hence the vacuum in the minds of our university students concerning the historical circumstances of our founding. At least once a year, the media present sensational proofs of this failure by the academy, complete with examples of botched multiple-choice tests for the entertainment of the reading public.

A disparity between language and reality grows out of abstractionism elevated as a scientific absolute, transcending philosophy. This disparity between our symbols, which attempt to bond social bodies to that reality, and our experience as individuals in social communities increases. Meanwhile, the would-be directors of this "science" attempt to impose abstractionism itself as the operative principle in restructuring the order of society, and of being itself. At least Karl Marx more fully understood that this is a deliberate strategy necessary to the gnostic empowerment of the social engineer, through which he may make society itself a machine to fit his limited dream. His followers in this attempt, however, appear naive as never before, advancing a vaguely held humanitarianism — the remnant dream — in justification of their own mechanistic reductionism of humanity.

Marx regarded the deconstruction of community signs as necessary in speaking against the realities of human nature. That was the prelude to reconstituting society itself as the only reality suited to communal worship, through that elevated sign, the emergent idol, namely the "State." The modernist version, descended from the Moses of secular religion, is the current sentimentality of a residual Marxism. Naive as Marx himself was not, our secular socialists overlook an elementary and self-evident truth that Marx saw clearly and so labored to obscure. As Professor Sandoz puts it, "Society has no existence apart from the human beings who compose it." The increasingly vaporous utopianism that has followed from Hobbes and Hume and Marx, skimmed from the surface of their thought lest the depths prove too unsettling to Edenic desires, obscures within community thought itself, as opposed to what ought properly be the searching academic concern, a turning point in modernist thought. Marx understood the turning all too well: the first order in the deconstruction of reality is to reduce "human beings" from their given natures in order to build with their emp-



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tied existences a new "society." For Marx, it was the idea of the state as the god of all being. In our case, we no longer know the end intended and so resort, in desperate vagueness, to "humanitarianism."

It is in response to such obfuscations of political reality that Professor Sandoz writes his book. What he recognizes as necessary to a viable social order is our recovery of valid "theory" in support of our given human nature, of the primary end of social order itself: the support of the citizen as a discrete intellectual — as a *person* beyond the reductionist shibboleths such as *citizen* or *individual*. Without such distinction, we shall continue to stand confused between mediate and final ends. Without such distinction, we shall, as Professor Sandoz says, be misled by "the notion of saving mankind through politics," which is a notion "not only mistaken but ultimately disastrous."

Theory, common sense tells us, is always precedent to our practical exercise of any science, "political" or other. Theory is always operative, whether at the level of tribe or nation, since any concerted action wherever two or three or more are gathered together is possible as concert only where binding principles are either tacitly or explicitly accepted. For this reason, central questions must be raised again and again in certifying communal concert, a lesson at least as ancient as the teachings of that old gadfly Socrates. And such questions yield resolution only to the rigor of that intellectual action we once termed *philosophy*. Because of the dependence of social order *in* philosophy, implicit even in sentimental "political science" (whether recognized by the practitioner or not), that discipline must, as Professor Sandoz insists, establish itself from its beginning in philosophy rather than pretend to the authority of a science. In doing so, it must as an intellectual discipline address at the outset the question of all questions: *what is man?*

If political science is to be truly "practical," then, its responsibility is foremost to the existential nature of man as discrete creature, revealed by his relation to other men and to nature itself as understood by rigorous philosophy and not merely as defined by the moment's "science." That is, it must see the discrete person in relation to his complex existence. An understanding of human relationships is ill-served by abstract renderings, as in statistically engineered models, whether of traffic systems or of housing systems. That manner of solution can be only ad hoc, since its principle has been divorced from complex reality.

We need only look to our own failures in dealing with poverty, failures "scientifically" established by scholars companionable in their thought to Professor Sandoz. See, for instance, George Gilder's *Wealth and Poverty* (1981) or Charles Murray's *Losing Ground: American Social Policy 1950-1980* (1984). What we learn from these books is that statistics indicating trends do not significantly register the truth of how things stand in the actual circumstances of human society — unless those statistics are governed by an understanding of how man himself stands out of his own nature, of how he stands within the existential complex we used to call "creation." That complex has been "progressively" reduced by the modernist spirit through the desacralization of terms like *nature* until *creation* itself has become that amorphous fiction, the *environment*.

The virtue of Professor Sandoz's new book is that it recovers a realism necessary to our consideration of the problems of social order that are the special province of the discipline called political philosophy. Sandoz recalls us to known but forgotten truths, the most salient one being that our understanding of what man is by his given nature is operative always in our pursuit of social order.

Robert Conquest, asked to specify what lessons for the West are to be learned from the attempted coup by Marxist hard-liners against Gorbachev last August, replied in part: "If you are a student, switch from political science to history." What Professor Sandoz would no doubt add is, "Switch to the *philosophy of history*." ⟨C⟩

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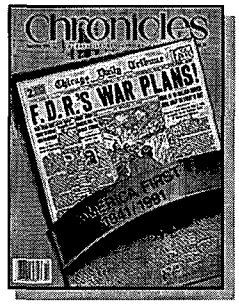

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A Very Private Person

by Brad Linaweaver

The State of the Union: Essays in Social Criticism
by Albert Jay Nock
Edited and with a Foreword by Charles H. Hamilton
Indianapolis: Liberty Press; 340 pp., $20.00

◆

When Albert Jay Nock died in 1945, American civilization had known saner times. Having just conquered the world through the Final Deal of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, the new colossus had a growing appetite, undaunted by expanse or expense. It was something on the order of: Today the earth, tomorrow the universe!

The author of *Our Enemy, the State* had not so much warned as observed what every victorious state will inevitably do; and the author of *Memoirs of a Superfluous Man* entertained no illusions about the implications of total victory in the last war he lived to witness. The recently terminated enemy had been hamstrung by its Weltanschauung, bound to an exclusivist racial fantasy. The new enemy had a similar weakness, with class taking the place of race. These ideologies hobbled themselves. They were parochial. Not so the victorious American empire with a vision that excluded no one and nothing from its all-devouring hopes. The mystery is how such an indiscriminate machine as 20th-century American culture could coexist with as discriminating a native son as Albert Jay Nock.

Charles Hamilton has brought together essays never before included in a book with others taken from books long out of print, as well as a number of classic essays. In the wake of the uproar produced by the publication of H.L. Mencken's diaries several years ago, the new Nock collection arrives on the scene at an interesting time. If these two old friends could only see the America of the present day (where the most humdrum of their daily observances would be suspect, challenged, and condemned), what would they make of it?

In his time, Nock found more examples of the humane life in Europe than in America, but he drew no hard and fast conclusions concerning this. As several pieces in this collection attest, he viewed people and places *sui specie aeternis*. Although a single-taxer, individualist, and anarchist, he was immune from the desire to torture reality into preconceived patterns. Mencken, the cynic, would sometimes allow the emotion of the moment to color his reporting; Nock, by contrast, was almost aloof. The bracing, classical curriculum of which he never tired was, in his view, immunization against unrealistic expectations; but the whole of the 20th century runs against realism, and it is all too easy to begin believing in solutions in spite of oneself.

Nock could be writing about the Persian Gulf War when he excoriates "pseudo-patriotic flatulence," "perfectionist-patriotic literature," and "inert romanticism" in a piece entitled "The Return of the Patriots," originally published in 1932 in *Virginia Quarterly Review*; he even speaks of "our glorious republic" in tones as sarcastic as those of Gore Vidal—or Henry Adams. In "The Criminality of the State," which first appeared in the *American Mercury* in the terribly difficult year of 1939, he writes, "Many now believe that with the rise of the 'totalitarian' State the world has entered upon a new era of barbarism. It has not. The totalitarian State is only the State; the kind of thing it does is only what the State has always done with unfailing regularity, if it had the power to do it, wherever and whenever its own aggrandizement made that kind of thing expedient." This never-before anthologized essay alone is worth the price of the book.

Was there ever really a day when someone who expressed such views could be accepted as a conservative? In "A Little Conserva-tive," excavated by Hamilton from a 1936 issue of the *Atlantic Monthly*, Nock considers the inadequacy of all political labels. He preferred to regard himself as a "radical" in the original sense of the word, and with characteristic prescience observed: "In the glossary of politics and journalism, the commonest, nay, the invariable connotation of 'conservativism' is in terms of money; a 'conservative policy' is one by which a larger flow of money can be turned towards one set of beneficiaries rather than towards another . . ." (Of course, this definition works equally well to describe other political creeds, and Nock generously includes them.) One is struck again and again by how much Nock was a private person who thought the best place to be was beyond politics. Not even to advance causes in which he placed a modicum of faith would he subject himself to the necessities of political action. "My individualism," he explained, "was a logical extension of the anarchist principle." And if conservatism had no identity when Nock wrote (classical liberalism was a lost cause), then how pointless is today's brouhaha over neoconservatism, a word bereft of even the shadow of meaning. Modern liberals want what neoconservatives want, and vice versa. None of them will ever relinquish their dream of free lunches, endlessly redistributed. They are all jobholders in search of a rationale.

Probably the most disturbing essay in the book is the previously uncollected "Peace the Aristocrat," from the May 1915 issue of the *Atlantic Monthly*. Nock points out why the common man prefers war to peace, for in war he shares his miseries and has a sense of being part of the grand purpose. Nock has it that war serves "the instinct for equality"; and that the politician realizes that war is simply more interesting and exciting than peace—"this instinctive knowledge is the primary essential qualification for his squalid trade."

The critics of Albert Jay Nock pronounce him a dandy and a snob, but

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they never address the issues he raised. Today's spokesmen for both the left and the right have a vested interest in keeping Nock out of the public eye. There is a modest attempt under way to resuscitate the Old Right with a strong emphasis on a libertarian view of foreign policy. This effort is certainly worthwhile, not least because it annoys the managerial elite, who prefer attacks from populist quarters. As for the "little conserva-tives" who couldn't wait to become part of the establishment, they should be careful about the intellectual sources they strip-mine in their endless quest for self-justification. These people no longer care about Doing the Right Thing. They want to win, careless of the result. Should they happen across *The State of the Union* or *Our Enemy, the State*, they might take a moment to reflect that the "Our" in the latter title doesn't refer to everyone who calls himself a conservative.

Brad Linaweaver is author of Moon of Ice, *winner of the Prometheus Award given annually by the Libertarian Futurist Society. He is a regular speaker at the Albert Jay Nock Forum.*

The Anti-Americans

by William R. Hawkins

Anti-Americanism: Critiques at Home and Abroad, 1965-1990
by Paul Hollander
New York: Oxford University Press; 515 pp., $35.00

◆

This latest installment in Paul Hollander's series of exposés of left-liberal thinking has a broader perspective than his previous work. His first book, *Political Pilgrims*, and subsequent writings focused on the affinity of Western liberals for communist states vis-à-vis the United States. Now, with the Cold War over and communism discredited, the real motive of these people is starkly visible: it was not so much a love for the communist bloc as it was hatred for the United States that drove the left, which embraced Marxism because it seemed to pose the most serious challenge to America. The failure of the Marxist system does not in any way lessen hostility to the American one; it only leads to a wider search for new alternatives that might prove more effective in deposing the United States as the leader of Western civilization. "Anti-Americanism" is the most accurate description of an ideology that is concerned far more with what it opposes than what it supports.

Here is the key to the many contradictions observable in leftist writings on particular issues. Leftists loudly proclaim the priority of the community over the individual, branding private property as antisocial and conspicuous consumption as harmful to the environment. Yet when the question is AIDS testing to protect public health, measures to apprehend and confine criminals (Jonathan Kozol deplores "prison cells for those—too few—who will not break"), the duty of citizens to provide for the common defense, or even the use of social pressure against deviate behavior, leftists become extreme libertarians. The element of consistency that runs through all these positions is the championing of anything that is at odds with mainstream society. The bulk of Hollander's book deals with statements by a wide variety of leftists who loathe every aspect of American life. This makes Hollander's book a great reference work, even though it is organized mainly by source (Church, Higher Education, Media, Western Europe, etc.) rather than by topic.

Hollander is less satisfying when he tries to explain why radicals feel as they do: the counterculture seems simply too alien to him. The central leftist indictment from which subsidiary ones derive he terms "inauthenticity." "American society," he writes, "as experienced by the critics is permeated by falsehood, hypocrisy, pretense. Nothing is genuine, original or trustworthy . . . there is a substantial gap between the way things are supposed to be and the way they really are, a discrepancy between ideals and reality, theories and practices, inspirations and achievements." Hollander quotes Christopher Lasch as saying, "the moral bottom had fallen out of our culture," a diagnosis for which he has sympathy. "I can understand that the openness, the freedoms and the moral-ethical free-for-all characteristic of American society and culture can be troublesome and burdensome . . . lacking in solid structures and necessary limitations." The left has made good use of this insight in its campaign to subvert the churches, and many conservatives echo the indictment (the right also being a dissident movement).

The left places the entire blame on capitalism, which it takes as a synonym for modernity, and many critics on the right also fault modern capitalism as it is defended by libertarians, who not only claim preeminence for "the market" over all other aspects of life but preach a basic incompatibility between economic calculation and "irrational" feelings of morality or loyalty. Such apologists condone homosexuality on the ground that the average household income of childless sodomite couples is above the national average and thus should be regarded as an important source of consumer spending. Meanwhile, industries vital to the long-term growth and security of the United States are transferred overseas (or allowed to die in favor of foreign sources) by a managerial elite that has simply shrugged off every notion of a national identity.

Conservatives, however, know that private enterprise predates the development of the rootless *laissez-faire* philosophy. The puritan, bourgeois, and patriotic virtues are not only compatible with, but essential to, the long-run survival of capitalist systems, just as capitalism is essential to the material progress of virtuous societies. It is the traditional values that provide the framework that prevents capitalism from shaking itself to pieces. Conservatives thus advocate a matrix of values to strengthen society, such as those associated with economic nationalism. Leftists understand these connections too. As feminist Andrea Dworkin says, "the destruction of the middle-class lifestyle is crucial. . . . We want to destroy patriarchal power at its source, the family and its most hideous form, the nation-state."

It is the radical view itself, however, that is entirely "inauthentic": a vision in which nothing is clear except that utopia must be fundamentally different from any society that has ever existed

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on earth. Leftism castigates Western imperialism for having destroyed what it sees as viable alternatives to Western civilization, though a longer view of history reveals that what leftists hate most about America ("the myth of competition and the glory and excitement of victory," in Richard Barnett's words) is common to all successful societies since the dawn of time, part of a pattern that characterizes the military and commercial struggles between states as well as the more general technological triumphs of man over nature. Yet, under the guise of multiculturalism, the search continues to identify (or completely fabricate) alternative cultures capable of supplanting those of America and of the West (preferably, cultures that have not lost their moral superiority by accomplishing very much).

Radicals have no authentic feeling for the blood and soil of true communities. On the basis of a few slogans shouted to a mob in an alien tongue by some demagogue seen only on television, they will shift their allegiance from neighbors and co-workers, families and friends to complete strangers halfway around the world. They have no tangible homeland, only an incoherent ideology. They cross the line between dissent and treason to become the "anti-Americans."

William R. Hawkins writes from Knoxville, Tennessee.

The Insatiable Presidency

by William B. Murchison

The Triumph & Tragedy of Lyndon Johnson: The White House Years
by Joseph A. Califano, Jr.
New York: Simon & Schuster;
398 pp., $25.00

◆

Suddenly everybody is writing about Lyndon Johnson—Robert Caro, Robert Dallek, Joseph Califano: holding the late President's lanky carcass up to the light, prodding and poking to see what the man was made of.

The political pathologists differ among themselves. Caro, in two volumes, with two more due, has virtually nothing good to say about his protagonist. Dallek takes a more spacious view: the late President, for all his faults, attempted or achieved much that was good. And Califano, who was Johnson's chief domestic policy adviser and a principal architect of the Great Society? You might be surprised. As first-person accounts go, this one scores high for detachment. Califano sought "to give firsthand testimony on the man and President I saw, 'with the bark off,' as he used to say when he wanted me to tell him something cold with no punches pulled."

How else is it possible to talk usefully about Lyndon Johnson and his times (a necessary enterprise given the long shadow LBJ casts from the grave)? He must have been one of the three or four most maddening public figures who ever lived—shifty, conniving, bullying, but almost supernaturally good at what he did; "brave and brutal," as Califano puts it, "compassionate and cruel, incredibly intelligent and infuriatingly insensitive, with a shrewd and uncanny instinct for the jugular of his allies and adversaries. He could be altruistic and petty, caring and crude, generous and petulant, bluntly honest and calculatingly devious—all within the same few minutes." His whole administration was in some sense a paradox. He sought radical change at home while fighting—half fighting, really—a foreign war; concerning which he tried to deceive the American people, who turned on him. He overreached. This was his tragedy.

Lyndon Johnson cries out for a Shakespeare to give him life. Well, character delineation is not what Joe Califano got into politics for. But within the constraints imposed by ideological attachment to, and personal intimacy with, the subject, he performs with distinction. This is an honest book. That is no light compliment, given the subject matter.

The graphic personal details we have come to expect in any account of Lyndon Johnson are here: the nation's chief magistrate displaying a boil on his rump, brushing his teeth while buck-naked, fuming when the hired help wandered out of phone range. All of which is interesting, even though it's not the thing we need most to know about Johnson. The thing we need most to know is what Johnson thought he was doing when he revolutionized American life without the voting public's having invited him specifically to do so. Califano doesn't provide all the answers, but he demonstrates in detail the compulsiveness of the Johnson political style.

LBJ was an inveterate and consummate meddler. Everything was his, and the federal government's, business. His solution for a perceived problem was a law or program. "There will never be enough for this man," Califano describes himself as musing in those days; "he adopts programs the way a child eats rich chocolate-chip cookies."

Ever wonder how we got saddled with those child-proof caps on aspirin bottles? Califano tells the story. "[M]y son Joe had swallowed a bottle of aspirins and I had rushed him to Sibley Memorial Hospital," where the President tracked down his counselor. "After offering to help, Johnson said he'd always worried about children getting into medicine bottles and hurting themselves. 'There ought to be safety caps on those bottles so kids like little Joe can't open them.' That prompted the proposal for the Child Safety Act, which Congress eventually passed in 1970."

The second session of the 89th Congress, which adjourned in October 1966, passed 97 of the 113 major measures the President had requested. Johnson had a song written to celebrate its achievement: "We salute you, Congress, for a job well done / Making our Society a Greater one."

"At times," Califano comments, Johnson "lost sight of the fact that laws were not an end in themselves." Small wonder, because Johnson was bent on "social and economic revolution, nothing less." This candid observation raises a correlative question Califano doesn't really answer: how much of all this political hyperactivity, this revolutionary enterprising, stemmed from genuine social commitment, and how much of it from little-boy longing for approval? The question is central to any appreciation of what America became through the whirlwind ministrations of Lyndon Johnson. Califano underscores the fervor with which Johnson proposed and worked for his goals. But there are holes in the account. Johnson's supposed at-

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tachment to civil rights, his desire to end, as he put it, "this God-damn discrimination against Negroes"—where are the signs and symptoms of it prior to November 22, 1963? How to account for Johnson's anti-civil rights record in Texas politics, as detailed by Robert Caro? Where, in his senatorial career, are the hints that between those outsized ears lay the mind and conscience of a sensitive reformer? Califano takes at face value Johnson's assertions of commitment—an unsafe thing, I'd think, in dealing with a politician the author himself describes as a master manipulator.

Califano tells us, mostly in passing, that Johnson craved affection, that he was genuinely grieved not to receive credit from the Kennedys and their admirers for carrying out, and then some, John Kennedy's goals (including resistance to communism in Vietnam). So late as 1966, Califano writes, Johnson "still ached over the lack of appreciation from the people for his achievements and longed to find a way to gain their recognition."

Unable to discern a philosophical thread in Lyndon Johnson's checkered political career, one gets to wondering: was the Great Society a buck-naked bid for adulation and a place in the history books? Or a shimmering vision, the product of mature reflection? Or a bit of both? And, if both, in what curious mixture?

One has a hunch that Caro will be more interested in such questions than is Califano, whose service to the Great Society was the defining event of his life—but who, to be fair, has written a good and useful memoir. Just how do you capture a man like LBJ in one book anyway? We will never be done with him—or he with us.

William B. Murchison is a columnist for the Dallas Morning News.

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Cultural Commodities

by Gregory McNamee

Academic Capitalism and Literary Value
by Harold Fromm
Athens: The University of Georgia Press; 281 pp., $35.00

◆

The "free and open exchange of ideas" lies at the very heart of what was once called, in more innocent times, liberal education. These days, the American university is the last place to look for that unhindered flow of thought. Instead, as books like John Ellis's *Against Deconstruction*, Dinesh D'Souza's overstated *Illiberal Education*, Roger Kimball's *Tenured Radicals*, and Richard Jacoby's leftist critique *The Last Intellectuals* have pointed out, our academics have converted free inquiry into a quite costly commodity, measured by the coinage of political correctness and unavailable to the heterodox.

To these justly inflammatory books one must now add Harold Fromm's *Academic Capitalism and Literary Value*, a harrowing look at the orthodox machine that now defines what takes place within humanities classes across the land. By his style, one would guess Professor Fromm to be a well-intentioned, bespectacled, somewhat musty political liberal of the kind once familiar to every college student. He is also fearlessly honest, unlike so many of his peers, and in these pages he fires on a wide field of deserving targets, ranging from so-called feminists to so-called Marxists to so-called deconstructionists, the last practitioners of a textual-critical doctrine I have elsewhere called "a nontheory compounded of topsy-turvy illogic, linguistic legerdemain, reductivist incantation, nihilistic obfuscation, blind francocentrism, and totalitarian impulse."

These ever-fashionable men and women, writes Fromm, "operate in accordance with their own aggressive, sometimes covert, agendas." The governing plank of the program, he rightly suggests—for which he will make countless enemies throughout the academic establishment—is the ancient principle of nest-feathering. For what the Marxists (Western universities, a current joke now has it, are the only places you'll find Marxists who'll live up to the name) and feminists and deconstructionists and minority-studies advocates want is not a rainbow-coalition literary canon, the dismantling of the dead-white-male tradition, or the equation of ancient Benin with Periclean Athens. No, what they want is tenure, advancement, such fame as it is possible for professors to acquire, and, above all, six-figure salaries.

Sad to say, they're getting all these perquisites by biting ever so fiercely the hands that feed them; the august pages of the *New York Review of Books* and *PMLA*, flagship journals of the revolution-in-progress, resound with their howls. Fromm, for one, is sickened at the sight. "I do not see anything wrong with enjoying computers or jet planes or advancing in the academy," he writes, "but I do see much to lament in the use of stylized moral jeremiads as coin to obtain yet a bigger share of the very spoils that are being denounced." He then proceeds to puncture a range of current pieties, illustrating along the way how those academics who have made the loudest noises against the study of, say, Shakespeare or Dante have been quickly co-opted by their home institutions, offered deanships and department chairs in the wan hope, one supposes, that they'll thereby retreat from the op-ed page and get back to the lectern.

In neat terminology, the favorite parlor game of academia, Fromm further suggests that because "self-interest, success, and profit" are their final and overarching goals, our tenured radicals must be considered practitioners of academic capitalism, whence part of the title of his book. His book—a series of essays that hangs together to the bitter end—is jammed with cases in point, and he names names: Stanley Fish, Henry Louis Gates, Elaine Showalter, and other newly wealthy superstars of the Big Ten come under his increasingly withering gaze.

Fromm is angry. And well he should be, for the humanistic vision of the university, one that the good professor has devoted himself to, is more and more under the spell of intellectual-industrial production, a regime in which "literary study becomes just an-

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other social science, while novelists and poets appear as more cunningly unscrupulous versions of ourselves, using their gifts for the same grubby vanities as the rest of us." Professor Fromm does not point out strongly enough that the logical result of this "academic capitalism" is the ever-greater irrelevance of the university to the general culture, and the loss to the humanities of a generation and more of promising students. What young man or woman with even a modicum of self-respect would, after all, ever want to join such a club?

What Harold Fromm has to say will come as no surprise to readers in regular contact with a college or university, as teacher or student or interested alumnus. But his revelations will surely distress those outside the immediate orbit of the academy, men and women who may fondly remember their journeys through Homer and Plato and Locke, the flotsam and jetsam of a shipwrecked canon. Any reader who comes to Fromm's pages must be outraged at the willful destruction of scholarly tradition in the interests of Mammon, a vandalism Fromm richly documents. One hopes that his book will enjoy a wide circulation among legislators in charge of university appropriations, and that, hope against hope, as Fromm puts it, "these self-absorbed Laputans [of the academy will] be recalled from their narcissistic afflatus with periodic Swiftian slaps in the face."

Gregory McNamee is a freelance writer and editor in Tucson, Arizona, and a recent refugee from a large state university.

Things as They Are

by William H. Nolte

Complete Collected Stories
by V.S. Pritchett
New York: Random House;
1221 pp., $35.00

◆

Frank Kermode began his excellent review of this fat and feisty volume with a statement that is at once factual and wildly misleading: "Sir Victor Pritchett is a Victorian." To be sure, Pritchett was born in 1900, when the Good Queen still sat on the throne and the sun never set on the empire, a time so distant that it seems almost fabulous. But there is nothing "Victorian" about V.S. Pritchett. The moral severity or hypocrisy (in a word, puritanism) that one associates with Victorianism is utterly foreign to his nature and to his work; for that matter, so too is the didactic urge to espouse some cause or other, correct the mistakes of both God and men, or propose a transvaluation of all values, beginning with those of the stuffy middle class—that is, the sort of urge that propelled such anti-Victorian Victorians as G.B. Shaw and D.H. Lawrence. No such animus moves Pritchett. His sole mission is to depict the antics, both comic and somber, of his countrymen at work and play. He would doubtless agree with Joseph Conrad that the writer's task is, "by the power of the written word, to make you hear, to make you feel—it is, before all, to make you *see*. That—and no more, and it is everything."

Pritchett was fortunate, I believe, in having been born into the lower middle class—fortunate in that he has never felt the need to defend or rebel against his childhood conditioning. Though conscious of all the factors that determine one's class in his highly class-conscious homeland, he has thus been free to employ his time in observing his compatriots, high and low, and then giving to his observations the dramatic shapes necessary to the art of storytelling. The son of a traveling salesman, he spent his childhood in the provinces and various London suburbs. At the age of 15 he left school and began working in the leather trade. When he was 21 he went to Paris where he worked in the photographic trade and then, again most fortunately for his career, became a journalist, living first in Ireland and then in Spain. All the while he was, of course, banking the precious materials that he later used in the writing trade that he has practiced for nearly seventy years. Although he has written several novels, books of literary criticism, and biographies (of Balzac, Turgenev, and Chekhov, writers from whom he has probably learned most), he is best known for his short stories, which began appearing in the 1920's. In this most recent volume of stories—his 15th—he includes the 82 tales, by no means all he has written and published, for which he wishes to be remembered. I can think of a few writers—Maupassant, Chekhov, Mann, Kipling, Faulkner, Katherine Anne Porter, and maybe two or three others—who have written more famous (that is, memorable) stories, but no one has ever written so many good ones, the kind that can be reread with undiminished delight.

While reading these stories, never more than two or three at a sitting, I was unable to detect any great technical difference between those of the early, middle, and late periods—that is, between those of the 1930's and on through the next five decades. There may be slightly more dialogue and fewer descriptive passages in the late tales, and, rather oddly, the last stories (they are chronologically arranged) have rather more to do with sexual concerns than the early ones. For example, in "The Diver" (1974), the narrator gives a hilarious account (probably more or less autobiographical) of an embarrassing but nonetheless educational encounter that took place when the speaker was 20, living in Paris, and trying to convince himself that he was a writer. A salty yarn more humorous than lubricious, the story has been told a thousand times but never with more *élan*.

The impressionistic manner of some of the early stories, which are more nearly sketches, reminds one of Stephen Crane or, in "The Evils of Spain," of Hemingway. It was difficult, of course, to set a story in Spain in the 1930's without aping a mannerism or two that originated with Papa, and in Pritchett's sketch there is more than a hint of parody. By the way, I think Pritchett a better writer than Hemingway. He is not nearly so sentimental or "romantic" (in the sense of being egotistic or self-centered, of making the reader constantly aware of who is telling the story and how he's telling it; in brief, Pritchett is never victimized by his style). More, he has a better grasp of character than Hemingway did, to say nothing of a wider variety of characters. Above all, in his realism there is ample room for the play of humor, and when his characters do or say something absurd, as is frequently the case, they seem simply to be revealing what

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is in their makeup rather than some view imposed upon them from outside. The Spanish tale begins with three staccatos: "We took our seats at the table. There were seven of us. It was one of those taverns in Madrid." From there we see and hear the men, each listening only to himself, trying to order fish for dinner. Ludicrous? Of course it is. But nonetheless diverting.

Pritchett's descriptions often act as grace notes in the stories. For example, in "The Chestnut Tree" the narrator recalls his boyhood job at a leather merchant's firm, where the daily arrival of the two lady bookkeepers was an eye-opening experience. The elder of the ladies looked "like a swan and thought so herself": "She was curving and sedate. With the sleepy smile of one lying on a feather bed in Paradise, with tiny gray eyes behind the pince-nez which sat on her nose, with the swell of long low breasts balanced by the swell of her dawdling rump, she moved swan-like to her desk. But not like a swan in the water; like a swan on land. She waddled. Her feet were planted obliquely. One would have said that they were webbed." In "Things as They Are," a bitter tale of two working women on their day off, getting crocked in a public house before noon and lamenting, first, the fleas that had robbed one of sleep the night before and then the loves that both had lost but could no longer clearly recall, Pritchett sets the tone with this description: "Margaret's square mouth buckled after her next drink and her eyes seemed to be clambering frantically, like a pair of blatant prisoners behind her heavy glasses. Envy, wrong, accusation, were her life. Her black hair looked as though it had once belonged to an employer."

The very best of the stories tend to be the longest—for example, "Blind Love," "When My Girl Comes Home," "The Necklace," "The Spree," "Tea with Mrs. Bittell," and three related tales narrated by a young baker, mainly concerned with the puckish behavior of a racing car driver named Noisy Brackett and his well-to-do wife, who spends her days trying to keep Noisy on a marital leash. But that is to name only a few of the best. If you have room for only one more book of fiction on your shelf, this is the one to get.

William H. Nolte is an emeritus professor of English at the University of South Carolina.

BRIEF MENTIONS

TALKING MYSTERIES: A CONVERSATION WITH TONY HILLERMAN
by Tony Hillerman and Ernie Bulow
Albuquerque: The University of New Mexico Press; 135 pp., $16.95

In early summer of 1989, I telephoned Tony Hillerman in Albuquerque, New Mexico, from a flophouse in Gallup and was slightly surprised when the celebrated mystery-novel writer answered the call himself. "Hillerman here," he said in a gruffly amiable and completely unselfconscious voice. I explained that I had been traveling on the Navajo Reservation and planned a swing through Albuquerque; would it be possible, I inquired, to drop by and chat with him about the Navajo people and their culture? Mr. Hillerman replied that he would be delighted to meet with me on my next trip to the Southwest in November, but that until then he was busy fulfilling a three-book contract he had signed with his publisher. Even so, he doubted that he could be of much help to me; he actually knew very little about the Navajos, he explained modestly, of whom he received most of his information from Ernie Bulow in Gallup. As I already had Mr. Bulow's address from Clarke Abbey, widow of Edward, I decided to follow this lead and was rewarded with good conversation on literary and ethnological subjects, not to mention a retrospectively interesting, though immediately nerve-racking, experience in a Navajo bar on the wrong side of the Santa Fe tracks in Gallup. In the course of the evening, Ernie mentioned that he was working on a publishing project with Hillerman and showed me drawings by the Navajo artist Ernest Franklin that he hoped to incorporate with the text. He was having difficulty bringing it all together, it seemed, and could not tell me when the proposed volume was likely to see print.

Two and a half years later the book exists, the product of the University of New Mexico Press rather than of Ernie's big book-strewn bungalow high on a hill overlooking the town of Gallup. It consists of an introduction by Ernie Bulow; an autobiographical essay by Tony Hillerman; a tape-recorded conversation between Bulow and Hillerman; a short story written by Hillerman at the request of the editors of *Playboy*, who subsequently rejected it; and a dozen drawings by Ernest Franklin depicting scenes from the Chee-Leaphorn novels, which Hillerman credits with having shown him what his own characters look like.

While Tony Hillerman may not know as much about the Navajo Indians as Ernie Bulow, who spent four years as a teacher with the Bureau of Indian Affairs at Fort Wingate, New Mexico, seems to think he ought, it is plain that Hillerman's familiarity with the culture is far more extensive than he is in the habit of claiming. Apart from a gift for storytelling, his chief asset as a novelist is his complete honesty, his refusal to fake; and it is this quality that comes through loud and clear in his discussion of his work habits, his preparation of a book, and his aims in writing one. Although the conversation with Bulow is the centerpiece of *Talking Mysteries*, the story "The Witch, Yazzie, and the Nine of Clubs" is interesting work in spite of its author's self-deprecatory remark that the short story form is not his forte. "Witch" is a tour de force whose central action occurs within the skull of the Navajo policeman Jim Chee while he attends a Blessing Way ceremony on the Big Reservation in Arizona, though it probably seemed to the *Playboy* editor that there was no central action at all. In the story, Chee's observation of a trickster's casual use of "illusion and distraction" leads him to identify the hitherto unsuspect gentleman as the culprit in a murder cleverly perpetrated by the same devices. And Hillerman's charming and completely ingratiating autobiographical sketch is of interest too: I had known that he is a former newspaperman in Albuquerque, but not that he is a war hero, critically wounded in action during World War II.

In short, *Talking Mysteries* almost makes up for the session I never did spend with Tony Hillerman; one of those rare writers who is obviously as decent and lovely a man as he is a gifted one, and who well deserves his present celebrity and success.

—*Chilton Williamson, Jr.*

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Letter From the Lower Right

by John Shelton Reed

Home Movies

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In a recent letter I mentioned the circuitous route my wife and I drove last summer on our way from California back home to North Carolina. The first day it took us past Bakersfield, where I'm told the children and grandchildren of Okies have imposed something resembling Southern culture on a part of California. (I'm sorry we didn't have more time to check it out; back here, alas, something resembling California culture is being imposed on a part of Dixie.) After that, our trip essentially retraced the Okies' route from the Dust Bowl, in reverse. Let me tell you about it. (Sorry I can't show you my slides.)

Crossing Arizona and New Mexico we were going parallel to old Route 66, and sometimes we got off the Interstate to get our kicks on that famous highway. Now that there's no traffic it's a lonesome drive, through a landscape of what we recognized from innumerable cowboy movies as buttes, mesas, gulches—stuff like that. There sure is a *lot* of landscape out yonder, and after a while it takes on a certain, shall we say, sameness. Whenever my attention flagged, though, I pictured a foreground of Okie jalopies headed slowly, wearily west, or broken down by the side of the road, radiators boiling over, a Woody Guthrie song on the soundtrack. All I can say is things must have been pretty dire in Oklahoma.

At intervals we saw reminders of Route 66's day as a main east-west artery: rusted signs, boarded-up gas stations, deserted snake and monkey farms, Indian trading posts now reduced once again to serving Indians. It was fun to picture summer after summer's worth of children arguing over where the *exact* middles of backseats were, back when travel was still slow enough to be something other than just a way to a destination.

Highway travel in the Southwest is still a bargain, or so it seemed after a year in the high-priced part of California. The food was mostly just good, greasy grub, nothing to write home (or *Chronicles*) about, but I'd already filled my sushi and cilantro quotas for the next twenty years anyway. Decent motels run $20-$30 a night, and in Holbrook, Arizona, gateway to the Petrified Forest (and ain't *that* something?) we stopped at one, the Wigwam Motel. The Wigwam is a splendid period piece that ought to be on the National Register, but only three of its tepee-shaped cabins were occupied the night we were there. Give it a try if you're in the neighborhood, or at least give it a tomahawk chop as you pass by.

Unlike many other "American-owned" motels we saw, the Wigwam doesn't advertise that fact on its sign. Most of the other places we stayed were run by what my wife and I have come to call, generically, "Patels," because it seems that most of the Gujaratis who run small motels in the United States do in fact have that surname. (Have you noticed? What is this, some kind of innkeeping caste?) I'm sorry to see them run afoul of nativism, if that's what's happening, because it seems to me that they're real Americans, maybe the last: hardworking, thrifty, family-oriented. And whatever may be going on in big cities, Asian immigrants to small towns are assimilating quickly. They're not interested in recreating Hong Kong or Saigon or Bombay, even if they could. (After all, they left those places.) Already some of the Asian students at my university are more Southern in accent and style than faculty kids who grew up in Chapel Hill. And it's not surprising: they're the children of doctors or restaurateurs or motel-keepers from small North Carolina towns, probably the only Asian graduates of their high schools. Probably honor graduates, too, bless them.

Anyway, there's a lot of *there* there in small-town and rural Arizona and New Mexico. We saw places less like North Carolina than any other part of the United States. I know, places different from here in ways different from other places that are different from here, if you follow that.

But that can't be said of Santa Fe. When we stopped there briefly to see friends it felt as if we'd somehow warped back into California. Thanks to rigorous zoning, Santa Fe does have a distinctive look, a sort of Walt Disney adobe-land effect. But most of those adobe haciendas have been built in the last fifty years, and increasingly, I'm told, Santa Fe is becoming part of exurban Los Angeles, home to very rich folks who commute now and then by private plane.

Why (I asked my friend) have all these Californians moved to New Mexico? I mean, you can find pseudo-Spanish architecture a lot closer to Beverly Hills.

"You don't understand," he said. "These are the ones who think they're artists."

And of course the coin dropped. Santa Fe is Carmel-in-the-desert. (Or Sodom-in-the-desert: we heard about one woman's intimate relations with a tiger-trainer, and subsequently, it was rumored, with his tiger.) Anyway, these are the pseudo rich, who dabble in art, drugs, and kinky sex—not the philistine rich, who dabble in golf, alcohol, and mere adultery. Poor folks like Mexican construction workers or Indian jewelry-makers or tutors at St. John's College must live in house trailers on some windswept patch of scrub 'way out of town.

What's wrong with Santa Fe is exemplified by the merchants who are lobbying against street vendors, arguing that grubby Indians sitting on the sidewalk peddling jewelry (at prices lower than those in the stores) soil the "Rodeo Drive style merchandising environment" that they have created. I take some pleasure from the thought that those Indians were sitting there long before anyone spoke English in Santa Fe and will probably be there long after the last English-speaker is gone.

One place they sit is in front of the old governor's palace, now a museum where we took in an exhibit on New Mexico's short Civil War history,

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which began when a force of Texans swarmed up the Rio Grande with the cry "On to San Francisco!" Now, I have to say that the plan to capture California's gold and unblockaded ports strikes me as awfully ambitious. I'd just driven from the Bay Area and knew in my posterior how far away it was. Still, the campaign did begin well, with a victory over the Colorado Volunteers at Valverde.

I didn't realize the present hostility between Texans and Coloradans went back so far, but at Valverde a Colorado officer rallied his troops with the cry, "They're Texans, boys! Give 'em hell!" It didn't work, though, and the rebs raised their flag over Santa Fe on March 5, 1862, before losing a battle, and the campaign, at Glorieta. (A long retreat through the desert back to Texas cost more lives than combat had: 500 of the 3,700 Confederate troops were battle casualties; 1,200 died from "other" causes.) The exhibit in Santa Fe displayed wedding rings found in a recently opened mass Confederate grave at Glorieta, and informed us that high-tech methods matching bone samples with tissue from known descendants make it likely that the bones will be identified and returned to Texas for burial.

Anyway, after the glitz of Santa Fe we went on, with some relief, to Las Vegas, New Mexico, 60 miles up the Santa Fe trail, and not glitzy in the least — in fact, a little on the seedy side. Las Vegas had its high point when the railroad came through in the late 19th century, as dozens of once splendid houses attest, and there you can see what is left of a real wild West town (where outlaws were hanged by the score from the local windmill) with little subsequent overlay and apparently no hope of attracting the tourist trade. Aside from an endless motorcade through town for a returning Desert Storm veteran, nothing much was happening in Las Vegas. It looked as if nothing much had happened for a long time.

From Las Vegas to Tucumcari is 106 miles, and we counted every single one because we made the mistake of beginning with only a quarter-tank of gas. The New Mexico highlands are beautiful, in a desolate sort of way, and they were damn near deserted. In the entire stretch we saw only six other cars and one gas station (and it was closed). We passed gates opening on dirt roads leading to out-of-sight ranch houses; one sign said "House 16 miles." But we made it to Tucumcari, refueled, and drove northeast to Dalhart, Texas, a charmless place surrounded by cattle-feed lots and right aromatic when the wind is right, which it was. The natives were friendly, though, in what seemed a Texas sort of way — or was I imagining things? Anyway, after a whole year in California without going near a hot tub I figured it was all right now that I was back in the Old Confederacy, so I soaked the travel off of me at the Super-8 Motel. Felt good, too.

The next morning found us in the town of Guymon, capital of a patch of ground known as "No-Man's-Land" because at one time neither Texas nor Oklahoma claimed it. Oklahoma blinked first, and got it. Guymon was the heart of the Dust Bowl, and I thought once again of the Okies and their Great Trek. It's a hell of a trip even now, in an air-conditioned Plymouth Voyager. We soon crossed into Kansas, arriving at the town of Liberal, proud home of both the Shrove Tuesday Pancake Race and "Oztoberfest," when people dress up like characters from the Oz books. Somehow we knew we'd reached the Midwest.

The next day we explored the ruins of Kansas City, a grand early 20th-century American city, lingering at its splendid Great War memorial and museum, dedicated by General Pershing and Marshall Foch when we thought war had been ended, but now rather odd in its attention to that unmemorable conflict. Kansas City's best days may be behind it, but it is still a famous barbecue town, and I was perplexed to eat barbecue as good as I've ever had — in a place that was all wrong.

KC Masterpiece is a restaurant — definitely not a *joint* — located in a suburban shopping center and owned by an M.D. It sells its sauce in supermarkets nationwide, serves Buffalo chicken wings and Monterey salad, and violates nearly all of Vince Staten's rules for good barbecue. (For instance: a good place has flies. If there are no flies, you should ask what the flies know that you don't.) But, my, it was good. That supermarket sauce is great (try it), but the meat was memorable. My beef brisket was merely wonderful, but my wife's pork tenderloin was sublime. She wouldn't trade me nearly enough of it. The next day we went to Arthur Bryant's, over by the old ballpark, a barbecue mecca ever since Calvin Trillin wrote it up. Its atmosphere is 100 percent correct, and it is a great joint with fine pork barbecue — but it's not as good as KC Masterpiece.

From KC onward the trip got less exotic as we went on through Missouri to North Carolina, via Ohio (don't ask), so I'll cut this short. What I want to know, though, is this: how can anyone travel this continent and believe that regional differences are unimportant?

Shoot, my distant kinsman Peter Taylor wrote a whole novel (*Summons to Memphis*) — and John Hiatt a great song ("Memphis in the Meantime") — about the difference between Nashville and Memphis. You want to talk about Holbrook, or Dalhart, or Liberal? Good Lord. No, America only looks uniform when viewed from far away — from the coasts, or from 30,000 feet in the air. Up close, it remains a delightful hodgepodge.

Attentive longtime readers will notice that John Shelton Reed has a new car. He thought it was American-made, but learned too late that it was assembled in Canada.

Letter From New York

by Murray N. Rothbard

Long Hot Summer, Long Cold Winter

◆

Violence in New York seems to have escalated to a new dimension. It used to be that ethnic violence would erupt in the hot summers, to subside in the winters when those folks who live their lives in the street withdraw indoors for R & R. Now, however, at this writing in midwinter, violence has taken hold in the winter as well.

The first thing that a non-New Yorker must understand about street violence is that, at least in those dreary "outer boroughs" outside of Manhattan

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where no one ever visits (except to drive to and from the airports), New York is a patchwork of ethnic neighborhoods. Each neighborhood, sometimes only a few blocks in area, has its own character and fights fiercely for its own integrity —which generally means bitter "turf wars" against interlopers hanging around, and a fortiori committing crimes, on some other group's cherished turf. While in the vision of many conservatives, the result should be reasonably happy harmony, in New York it has not of course worked out that way. Instead, there is fierce hatred among many of the groups, and particularly against those groups whose turf happens to abut one's own. And it should come as no surprise that in the middle of virtually every one of these fights looms the black underclass. This fact was something that everyone has known for a long time but considered a sin to mention, but the wraps have been off in New York for quite a while. New Yorkers, too, are tired of lengthy sociological arguments on the alleged deep structural causes of this condition; they are increasingly eager to do something about the supposed "symptoms," and fast.

While violence was only simmering during most of last summer, it suddenly peaked in August with the now famous Crown Heights race riot. Crown Heights is a neighborhood in Brooklyn in transition; and neighborhoods in transition are the most explosive, for that is where turf wars tend to flare up. Crown Heights used to be Jewish, and, in recent years, has become black. Most New Yorkers consider this process to be an "invasion," and refer to the Jews as having been "driven out." But one group of Jews stood their ground in Crown Heights: the Lubavitcher wing of ultra-Orthodox Hasidism. The Hasidim are mystical, ecstatic groups that began in various small towns of Eastern Europe in the 18th century, devoted to a Grand Rabbi, or "Rebbe," hailing originally from that town. The followers invest him with special mystical, or even divine, powers. Thus, different neighborhoods of Brooklyn are occupied by different Hasidic sects, the Lubavitchers (originally from Lubavitch) in Crown Heights, the Satmars in Williamsburg, the Bolzors in another nearby area, and so on. The men of each of the sects all wear their sect's variations of the common Hasidic uniform: black, broad-brimmed hat, black clothes, long side curls, white on white shirts buttoned to the neck without ties. Although the Satmars are almost as numerous as the Lubavitchers, they are relatively unknown to the readers of the *New York Times*. There are basically two reasons for the better press devoted to the Lubavitchers: (a) alone among the Hasids, the Lubavitchers are eager to convert other Jews to their movement; and (b) while all the other Hasidic groups are fiercely anti-Zionist, Rebbe Menachem Schneerson and his Lubavitchers became relatively pro-Zionist, to the extent of being able to command several swing votes in the closely fought Israeli parliament, or Knesset.

The reason for anti-Zionism among Orthodox Jews is simple: the Jewish state in Palestine is only supposed to be established by the Messiah; any state not established by the Messiah is an impious secular state that either should be ignored or, in the case of the Jerusalem sect, Neturei Karta, disobeyed openly. The "regular" (as opposed to the "ultra") Orthodox Jews, who are pro-Zionist, get around the Messianic injunction by saying that there is no need for a personal Messiah, because we are living in a "Messianic age," which is enough to establish the legitimacy of the state. Rabbi Schneerson is somewhere in the middle: even though in a sense pro-Zionist, he refuses to set foot in the state of Israel until such time as the Messiah arrives, and legitimizes the state. The Lubavitchers in Israel, in the meanwhile, are expending a great deal of resources building an exact replica, in the Negev desert, down to the most detailed furnishings, of the Rebbe's beloved palatial home in Brooklyn, which also serves as the world headquarters of the Lubavitcher movement. These preparations gave rise to a common suspicion that the Lubavitchers, including the Rebbe, consider the Rebbe himself to be the Messiah, and that he will travel to his replica home in Israel after he reveals that fact to the world. Cagily, the Lubavitchers, as well as the Rebbe, will neither confirm nor deny that they think of him as the Messiah.

One thing that has enabled the Hasids to stand their ground and even expand their turf in Brooklyn in the face of expansion by blacks, Hispanics, and Asians, is that they take very seriously the prohibition on birth control, and so they obey the biblical injunction to be fruitful and multiply. In addition, the Hasids have long had hefty political clout in Brooklyn, largely because they are politically savvy, vote in large numbers, are very well organized, and act as one under the orders of their Rebbe. For years, the Lubavitchers, for example, enjoyed around-the-clock police protection for their world headquarters. When asked why they should receive such special privilege when Cardinal O'Connor of the New York Catholic Archdiocese receives no such protection, the Lubavitchers replied that this is their world headquarters, whereas the cardinal was only the local bishop of his particular worldwide church. In Williamsburg, the Satmars conduct a neighborhood citizens patrol that does an effective job in keeping down street crime, a job appreciated and implicitly sanctioned by the police. Blacks complain that blacks found in Satmar areas at night are not treated with exemplary courtesy by the Satmar patrols.

Interracial tension exploded in Brooklyn last August when the Rebbe was returning from his weekly visit to his wife's grave, a visit that enjoys a regular police escort. One young Hasid driver in the Rebbe's entourage fell behind the rest of the escort, and went through a red light to catch up—not an uncommon practice in New York streets. Unfortunately, he hit another car, bounced off that car, and hit and killed a young black lad. The black masses on the streets erupted in fury, dragging the injured Hasid driver from his car and beating him in an act of revenge, first showing that they had their priorities straight by lifting his wallet. The driver's life was saved by a black passerby who rescued him from the mob. A private ambulance called by the Hasids was then used only to take the driver to the hospital, the reasoning being that a police ambulance would take away the body of the black boy so as not to incite the mob further against the Hasids.

The result was several days of continuing black rioting, looting, and mugging in Crown Heights, including blacks who came in from other neighborhoods to participate in the action.

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The Lubavitchers came out in force, taking care to throw a protective cordon around the Rebbe and his world headquarters. Apologists for the rioters of course claimed they were expressing, once again, their rage for the legacy of slavery. For once, it was easy for the rioters to find "a Jew," since the Hasids could be spotted by their distinctive uniform. Finally, after days of rioting, in which the police, too, expressed *their* rage by clubbing newsmen and photographers, the black rioters exacted blood vengeance by exultantly stabbing to death a visiting Australian Hasid, trapped in the crossfire of a world he could not be expected to understand.

For many New Yorkers, comic relief during the race riots was provided by the mugging of loudmouthed, leftwing populist, pro-black, Irish-American journalist Jimmy Breslin, who prides himself on hanging around in bars and having "street smarts," one of a New Yorker's proudest accomplishments. Well, Jimmy clearly has spent too much time lately hanging around with the elite, because he made his first big mistake by *taking a cab to the race riot*. Sort of like Marie Antoinette taking a cab to revisit the *sans-culottes*. When Jimmy arrives at the scene the young lads of the "black community" immediately yank him out of the cab, strip him naked, grab his wallet, and beat him. Meanwhile, Jimmy is yelling, "But I'm not Jewish!" and showing the young lads his press pass! Presumably by this time, his assailants had become equal opportunity muggers. Jimmy had surely lost it, expecting that the public school system had actually enabled the young muggers to read his pass; undoubtedly they thought Jimmy was a narc, and redoubled their mugging. After being rescued, Jimmy delivered himself of some choice epithets about the muggers specifically and about the Negro people in general, but the next day, safe in his Manhattan office, he reverted to his usual politically correct stance.

An uneasy calm returned to the city after that, but months later, this time during Christmas week, black violence struck again, this time in a bizarre but unfortunately not rare incident involving music, athletics, and what is laughingly called "higher education." The most popular form of "music" among urban black youth for the last several years has been "rap," in which the performers seem to be only one or two years older than their devoted admirers. (As someone who firmly believes that all popular music since Benny Goodman has emanated from various circles of hell, I will not try to elucidate the niceties of rap, or its possible differences from "hip-hop.") Rap concerts have often been an occasion for violence among the excited youth. Indeed, in November, a rap concert in Washington almost led to violence when an excited throng, trying to get in, broke down the glass doors of the entrance hall.

During Christmas week, the once-distinguished City College of New York (CCNY) located in Harlem, whose graduates at one time earned more Ph.D.'s than those of any other college, decided to put on, in its gymnasium, not a rap concert, but a celebrity basketball game between two sets of rap stars. Even granting that rap is "music," why anyone should want to see their favorite musicians play basketball passeth understanding. On the evening of the game, however, the pressure of the black lads and lasses to get into the arena became a stampede against the glass doors, in which nine people were trampled to death and dozens injured. Stampeding people to death trying to get *out* of a building (e.g., one that is burning) is fairly common; but trampling people to death to get *in* a building?

When the deaths began, the promoters called off the basketball game. This action enraged the youth in the seats, some of whom jumped from the bleachers trampling still more people below, while others, amidst the carnage, were, in true New York fashion, demanding their money back. Still others laughingly took the opportunity to demand autographs from their rap favorites. When emergency medics finally arrived at the scene, they were pummeled, beaten, had their hair pulled out, and were choked by the mob, either in an attempt to get them to tend to their particular friends or just on general principles.

In the days since this inimitable piece of New Yorkana, every layer of bureaucracy, every person and institution involved, has spent their time denying any responsibility or pointing the finger somewhere else. The police denied being late for the fray, and claimed that the college was responsible for security. The college blamed the police, while the nearby firemen said they should have been called. The college said that the rap promoter, a youth named Puff Daddy, was supposed to provide security; for a while, it was claimed that the House of Islam was hired by Puff Daddy to provide security, but that four-fifths of them walked off the job before the game because of a salary dispute. But the House of Islam claimed they knew nothing, and that the guards belonged to a renegade black Muslim outfit called Group-X.

It took a long time, in fact, to find out that Puff Daddy had been the promoter. At first, it was believed that the rap radio station KISS, which had boosted the game heavily and used its logo on the advertising, was a co-promoter, but KISS claimed it knew nothing. Another puzzle: who signed the contract for the college? The head of the student center, a Haitian immigrant named Jean Charles, said that, even though he is a lawyer, he really knew nothing, didn't know that a rap group was involved, and declared that the contract had been signed by a woman representing the Evening Student Government. This lady, Cassaundra Kirnon, is a 40-year-old "student" who, as a secretary for the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, was voted in as head of the student government by 53 out of 7,000 evening students, and heads a clique of five students in charge of a hefty $46,000 annual budget. Miss Kirnon apparently believes that CCNY president Bernard Harleston, who is also black, is an Uncle Tom type not sufficiently militant on behalf of black interests. Miss Kirnon, among all the principals, shut herself off totally from the press, although she is said to have "cooperated" with the authorities. Harleston got into deep trouble last spring during the City University student sit-in strike by being the only college head who failed to call in the police to root out the strikers. Now he cut a singularly unimpressive figure on television, as he "accepted responsibility" for the episode. Less than manfully, he stumbled: "Well, uh, I guess that as president I'm sort of responsible, but

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I knew nothing about it."

As an extra lagniappe to the proceedings, the question soon loomed: who exactly is to pay whom after many loving years of litigation expected to ensue from this tragedy? When the famed burly figure of leftist lawyer William M. Kunstler appeared on the tube (one of the few whites except for police spokesmen), the knowledgeable viewer realized that there were high stakes involved. It turns out that Kunstler is the attorney for Heavy D, co-promoter of the ballgame. Kuntsler also spoke up for Puff Daddy, who badly needs an attorney, since he was supposed, according to his contract, to take out insurance for the game and somehow neglected to do so. Kunstler tried to pin the blame on the college authorities, who should have supervised young Puff Daddy and made sure that insurance had been secured. Moreover, finances played other important roles in the proceedings. The promoter and/or student government was accused of overselling tickets, thereby helping cause the stampede. Also, the rap basketball game had been billed as an AIDS charity; but, in the event, no one could find the named charity, which was apparently unknown to the "AIDS community."

All in all, just another day in the Big Apple.

Finally, in early January, turf wars popped up again, this time in the Albanian part of the Williamsbridge section of the Bronx. Four members of an Albanian-American youth group called the Albanian Bad Boys caught two black youths, a boy and a girl, on their turf, and spray-painted them with white shoe coloring, shouting, "You black [censored] are going to turn white today by the Albanian Bad Boys." In the course of events this crime does not appear very serious, but of course the press started howling about "race hatred and brutality." A massive police search is now on for the Albanian lads, and there are dark hints that all this is connected to a dread Albanian wing of the Mafia.

To the average New Yorker, however, the word "Mafia" does not really inspire the proper terror. It is well-known, for example, that the only really safe streets in New York are those Italian neighborhoods where alleged Mafia *capos* and their families live. No muggings take place on those streets, no rapes, no hassles. A legendary incident occurred a few years ago when muggers invaded a convent in the Italian section of East Harlem and raped and murdered several nuns. The Mafia sent the word out on the street: "The killers are dead in twenty-four hours." The murderers, one of whom had fled to Chicago, voluntarily turned themselves in the next day. Clearly, they would rather embrace the criminal justice system than brave the wrath of the Mafia. It is intriguing that the villains realized that the Mafia knew who they were, without benefit of meticulous detective work. And New Yorkers should blanch when the Mafia is mentioned?

All New York looks forward to July, when the Democratic presidential convention comes to town. The last time the Democrats arrived, the city authorities cleaned the streets, the clerks were actually polite, and even the muggers were sternly ordered by the authorities to cease and desist for that week, or else. But that was years ago, and these days the bums and muggers are a lot feistier, and far less under control. Cynics speculate that the *real* reason Mario Cuomo bowed out is that, after the Democratic delegates encounter The Community on the streets of Manhattan, Mario would be lucky if he left the convention hall alive, much less as prospective President of the United States.

Murray N. Rothbard is a professor of economics at the University of Las Vegas and vice president for academic affairs at the Ludwig von Mises Institute.

Letter From Ireland

by George Watson

The Easter Rising and the IRA

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In April 1991 an aged Rolls Royce, vintage 1949, drew up to a small crowd outside the post office in Dublin. The president of the Irish Republic, Mary Robinson, stepped out for a brief ceremony, lasting less than half an hour, to mark the 75th anniversary of the Easter Rising in 1916, when a group of armed separatists seized the center of Dublin and declared independence from Britain at the height of the World War I.

The myth of Irish nationalism is based on that dramatic event and its proclamation of independence. The Provisional Irish Republican Army, or Provos, who in its name still maintain a violent campaign in the north, hailed the 1991 anniversary and condemned the Irish government in routine terms for having consistently, and over many years, betrayed the republican tradition. The Irish government, by contrast, faced the day with some apprehension. A quarter of a century earlier it had greeted the 50th anniversary of the Easter Rising with pageantry, and it had no wish to leave the celebration to others. But to celebrate against a background of terrorism in Ulster might appear to support the "obscene atrocities" (as one of its back-benchers put it) of the Provos; and Des O'Malley, a government minister, announced that what in his youth he had been taught to think of as a "glorious adventure" now represented, as he saw it, a dangerous model for the young of Ireland.

What neither side of the controversy is likely to have known is the astonishing fact that in 1916 the IRA did not support or favor the Easter Rising. It is a fact that, duly considered, might have let the Irish government off the hook and even given it a message to preach, which if not enough to stop the Provos in their tracks might have seriously embarrassed their campaign of intimidation and violence. It is not that this matter has never been mentioned: it is just that it has not sunk in. It is only known at all for the odd reason that in 1966 a priestly professor of early and medieval Irish at University College, Dublin, Father Francis Shaw, S.J., offered an article to *Studies*, a Dublin Jesuit journal. The article was called "The Canon of Irish History—a Challenge," and in it he convincingly documented the absence of the IRA from the Rising of 1916 and the contempt of its leaders for the IRA. The article was a reckless act, no doubt, for a medievalist and a man of God, and his spiritual fathers seem to have thought the challenge needlessly provocative at a time of relative quiet in Irish affairs. The article, at all events,

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was not published. Father Shaw, known to his friends and students as Father Frank, died soon after, aged 63, in December 1970, by which time the troubles in the north had been renewed. Two years after his death *Studies* published the article, in the belated hope of bringing the extremists to their senses.

Father Frank's argument was blunt. At no time had independence from Britain been the chief or only goal of Irish nationalism. The Irish Party in the British House of Commons, like Daniel O'Connell (1775-1847) before it, had been consistently against independence and had sought nothing more than local autonomy or home rule. Meanwhile, Sinn Fein, the political wing of the IRA, had been founded mainly by Arthur Griffith as "a constitutional, nonseparatist association," and it had "no connection with the Rising of 1916." Some of the leaders of the Rising, indeed, felt it to be hostile to them, and in any case useless and in terminal decline. The implication of the article was clear. The IRA could claim no credit for the act that led to the creation of an Irish state in 1921.

Credit, nonetheless, had been claimed. The confusion apparently arose because the name "Sinn Fein" ("Ourselves Alone") had somehow captured the imagination of the British, who came to use it carelessly as a broad term for Irish nationalists in general. In other words, the Irish mistake may have been in its origins a British mistake, much as President Robinson's official car in April 1991 was a British car. "It may come as a shock to some readers," Francis Shaw wrote in the mid-1960's, to know that as long ago as 1919 P.S. O'Hegerty, writing a history of Sinn Fein, confessed that it had "nothing to do with the insurrection," which in inspiration was Fenian. The Fenians were romantic nationalists from the Victorian Age. Only one of the seven men who signed the republican proclamation of 1916, Sean MacDiarmada, had ever in his life been a Sinn Feiner, and he had severed connections years before; while most of the remaining six would have objected strongly to being identified with that movement. The IRA took no part in plotting for arms with the Germans in 1916, seizing the Dublin post office, or killing some 300 civilians in the Rising, along with 130 British troops. Patrick Pearse, executed as a ringleader in May 1916, had told Arthur Griffith four years before, in an open letter, that he had "never had much affection" for Sinn Fein, and hoped the movement would soon die out. "It's about time for them," he wrote with satisfaction, noting their decline in Irish affairs. As the survivors of the Rising surrendered to the British in April 1916 and were led off as prisoners, an Irish crowd jeered at them, spitting on them as traitors who had taken innocent Irish lives, wrecked the main street of Dublin, and collaborated with the Germans in time of war; and it is possible that there were IRA supporters there, jeering and spitting with the rest.

None of this is now much remembered, in Ireland or elsewhere. The heroic IRA myth survives, and I doubt if Father Francis Shaw, that courageous priest-professor now twenty years and more in his grave, would have been at all surprised at the near oblivion into which his discovery had fallen. As he must have known, it is a rare article in a scholarly journal that changes the course of events or even the course of opinion, and he was a modest man and nothing of a politician. He loved an argument, however, by all accounts, though he is best known as a careful editor of medieval Irish texts. A sickly man, ascetic and humorless, he spent many hours visiting the dying in Dublin, eventually becoming a Superior in his order, and he died uncelebrated, though he is still remembered with affection by his colleagues and pupils. But if he cannot now speak, at least others can.

Ireland, it is said, is in all the world the saddest victim of history. But the real cure for bad history is not silence or the bomb but good history; and at least Francis Shaw, in his day, showed how potent facts can be, if you let them, and how much the past can do to enslave or make us free.

George Watson, a fellow of St. John's College, Cambridge, is the author of The Literary Critics *(Chatto),* Writing a Thesis *(Longman), and* British Literature Since 1945 *(St. Martin's).*

LIBERAL ARTS

CAR SURFING

A "car surfing" accident claimed the life of a 16-year-old girl in Wisconsin last winter. According to the *Capitol Times* last December, Fawn Cheyenne Mylenbusch was "on her stomach on top of the roof . . . clinging to the ridges in the roof" of a car approaching speeds of up to 55 mph when Joni Linster, the driver and a "best" friend, made a U-turn causing Mylenbusch to fall to the road and strike her head. Those attending the funeral said "car surfing was popular among bored teenagers." Mylenbusch was reportedly a part of a high school group called the "Too Stupid Society" and had car surfed "for more than a year."

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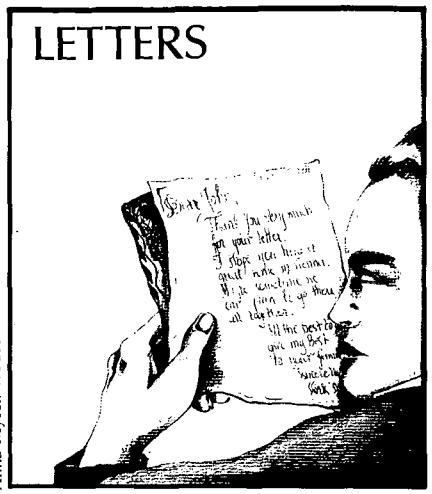

Anna Mycek-Wodecki

The Love That Dare Not Speak Its Name

by Stephen Provizer

"Snap out of it, they're only a pair of pants. . . . That's what I keep telling myself. Actually, they're a pair of linen pleated trousers I bought at Louis last spring. Little did I know what I was getting in for. The more I wear them, the more I love them, the more I wear them. And it's not as if they're my only pair of pants. But when I go to get dressed, it's like I don't have anything else in my closet."

—an advertisement for Louis clothing store in the *Boston Globe*

Thirty-one days in hell; lost my girl, my job, my apartment; on the nod, drinking Old Crow out of the bag. An old Army buddy in Men's Haberdashery sneaked me into the boiler room at Saks, where I sleep on a flea-bitten cot and sweat from the heat, but it's all scum like me deserves; a guy who'd give it all up for—a stinking pair of pants.

When I think about the first time I saw those babies—laying on top of the 34-inch waist pile, their fresh flaxen smell curling up into the air like a spring morning that had sex written all over it—they almost looked like they were ready to leap off the counter and pull themselves up over my tasseled loafers. I hesitated to even touch them, for fear I would mar their perfection, but when I finally dared to lift them up, they sprang to life beneath my touch and, at that moment, we began to breathe as one.

In a kind of trance, I brought them to the dressing room, but I had no doubt that they would wrap my body as no one, or, rather, nothing ever had. I looked at my old pants with disgust; sure, they were 100 percent wool, but so what? Wearing them now made me feel like a vegetarian buried in a pile of pork rinds. They had become contemptible and vile and I knew they were headed for the Goodwill pile, where all unclean things end up.

I shed them quickly and when I slipped my legs slowly into the new object of my affection, I knew how Mario Andretti must feel sliding into a highly strung Ferrari—"Be careful," she will purr to you, "I can be dangerous. But if you treat me right, I'll give you the ride of your life."

The waist and length were perfect and no anticlimactic alterations necessary. The line, as it fell over my hips, was careless and subtle, like Brancusi's birds. The cuffs broke exactly at the shoe top and I knew instinctively that when I sat, they would rise to reveal a perfect three inches of imported beige silk stocking.

In an exalted state, the most important events of my life flashed through my mind—my first pair of wing tips, my graduation from the Young Men's Department, my first cummerbund. Tragic memories, too, rose up from my unconscious—beloved argyle socks lost, cashmere sweaters clumsily snagged, white bucks negligently scuffed. A wave of guilt overcame me.

"God, I am unworthy!" I cried and started hastily unzipping the fly. But just then, I heard a voice, which was coming from somewhere near the double-sewed crotch: "We are bound together forever," it said, and I knew it had to be so.

Our first appearance was an immediate sensation: when we entered the bar at the Ritz, a hush fell over the hors d'oeuvres table. Half the crowd burst into applause and the other half ran to telephones to scream at their tailors. At that moment, we had it all. We were Tristram and Isolde, F. Scott and Zelda, all tied together in one neat bundle. Every Gibson I drank was as clean and dry as the Sahara; every bon mot shone like the spire on the Chrysler Building. That night, all was heaven.

The second evening, we still made an impact, but the keen edge was slightly dulled. I heard a stray comment about my wardrobe getting repetitious, and the bartender put only two onions in my Gibson. Having worn the pants since I bought them the day before, they didn't drape quite as well, but the crease was still as sharp as aged Roquefort.

The next day at work, my secretary began shooting meaningful glances at my legs. I glared back at her but knew what she was trying to say. I had now had Them on continuously for 72 hours, but refused to admit that anything out of the ordinary was going on.

That night, I saw my fiancée, Rowena. Madly in love as we were, neither of us thought much about my pants. We progressed through a candlelight dinner and kissed passionately by the fireside. We both began to disrobe, but when I tried to take Them off, some powerful force stayed my hand. "It's me or her," it said and I was powerless to disobey. I pleaded with Rowena to give me time to figure out the situation, but she was adamant.

"Lookit, bud, I'm not interested in a *ménage à trois*. I hope you and your trousers will be very happy. I'd suggest you go to Hong Kong for your honeymoon and have them make you up a couple pairs of cheap in-laws."

Things spiraled down faster and faster from that point. First, the pleats started to sag, then the crease began to lose its keen edge. Gin and coffee stains mottled the beautiful crème color until I became too embarrassed to show up at work. Every day, I saw my pants degenerate a little more and my life with it. I lost my job and was barred from the Ritz. I took to drinking in

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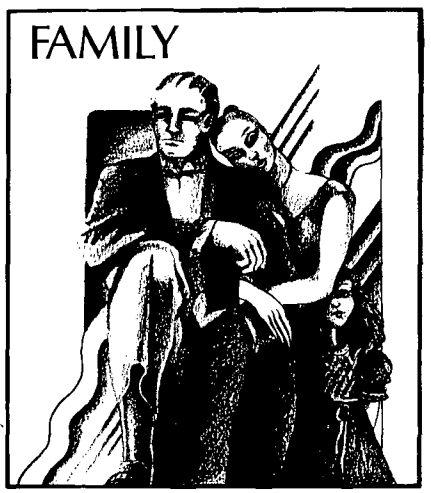
sleazy bars; joints where they wouldn't know linen from gabardine and eventually, even they wouldn't let me in. The only way to stop the downward spiral was to dry-clean, but I couldn't let those butchers get their hands on my pants.

I let it all slip away and now, here we lay in tatters. But if you think either of us regrets an instant of it, you're wrong. We may have taken a few years off each other's lives, but we've experienced a depth of passion that few ever will. And when we go—defiantly locked in each other's embrace—perhaps our passing will inspire others to proclaim their forbidden love, and finally come out of the closet.

Stephen Provizer writes from Cambridge, Massachusetts.



Anna Mycek-Wodecki

Noni

by Clinton W. Trowbridge

"Whew-whew! Whew-Whew!" I looked past my mother through the half open taxi window. An old man in a grey flecked, tweed jacket was walking a Scotch terrier on a leash. With much effort she cranked the window down another turn and stuck her head out. "Whew-whew!" she whistled again. The man turned, surprised, though not unpleased, and then the taxi lurched forward and my mother slumped back into her seat. "What a hunk!" she said, and let out a momentous groan. I laughed, but she did not respond. She sank more deeply into her seat, her face turned away.

Eighty-three, and weighing no more than that, she was still capable of such surprises. My sister, Katharine, had called the previous week to tell me that "Noni," as we called her now, had—with tears in her eyes and all the frustration of a teenager—fought with her for half an hour about wanting to marry Bob, her 41-year-old physical therapist. "Why shouldn't I?" she'd complained over and over again. "We're both free." Recently divorced, her therapist was known to us all for his good looks—the picture on her dresser showed a smiling, wavy-haired Perry Como—for his magic fingers, and for the jokes he told her twice a week, repeated to us as regularly as news bulletins. "Good," I'd said to Katharine. "Keeps her young." But I didn't have to deal with her except on the phone. To me it was just another funny story. My wife and I lived fifty miles away, out on Long Island, and got into New York only occasionally. My sister, in Chappaqua, saw our mother several times each week. My younger brother, Gus, lived with his family only 13 blocks away. More detached, I could enjoy being surprised.

We drove on another few blocks in silence, and then she turned toward me and I saw her tears. "Why shouldn't I get married again," she said, her face twisted in misery.

"Mother!" I found myself saying, shocked by the nakedness of her emotion.

"Why shouldn't I?" she cried out again. "We're both free!"

* * *

My father had died just over nine years before, in 1976, at the age of 79. They had been living at the Amsterdam House, a posh "care facility" with an across-the-street view of St. John the Divine, elegant paintings in the foyer, elaborate wooden puzzles spread out temptingly on card tables, and biweekly sing-alongs. They'd wanted to go home to their apartment on 68th Street the day they'd arrived, but to please us and the doctors, they'd stayed three months—as long as they could. "I don't give him two weeks," the doctor told me when at last we agreed to let them go home. My mother had originally gone to be with my father, but the doctors tried to keep her there for psychiatric treatment at the end. She insulted them daily, corrected their grammar—as she always did everyone's—and could not refrain from telling them to their faces how stupid she thought them. My father, who had been an Episcopalian minister for 51 years, died six weeks later, peacefully, with a smile on his lips. A week before my mother remarked quite casually that he'd lost his belief in the life hereafter. "How do you know that?" I'd said, shocked.

"He told me so. Yesterday." She said it just as she said everything else—as if she were reading it aloud from the *New York Times*. It was only later that it occurred to me that she'd probably made it up. Some six months after that she had no memory of having said it, so I will never know whether my father's almost saintly serenity at the end was based on his sure hope of eternal bliss or on an acceptance of death as nothingness. His life had certainly not been serene, neither within nor outside the bosom of the family—he and my mother having rather famously and vociferously fought for most of their lives—and his ministry had been passionate but frustrating. Why did my mother tell me that about him, if it were not true? Or why, without amplification, if it were? Why didn't I press her? Why did I not question my father? Why?

My brother is the founder and head of the Manhattan Country School. He has suffered more than the rest of us, probably, from my mother's delusions. A few years ago when she called to tell us that her good friend so-and-so had just given Gus's school one million dollars, we bubbled with excitement. But Gus's voice sounded weary when I spoke to him on the phone. He'd called the woman in question, hopeful yet suspicious. "No," she'd said, "I wish I could afford to. Poor Jean."

My mother should have been an actress. That was part of it. We all said that. She had such a capacity for making the unreal real. And for a brief moment she had been an actress, three years before that million-dollar delusionary remark. As a result of a chance encounter between a granddaughter and Woody Allen's talent scout, Noni had made a cameo appearance in the

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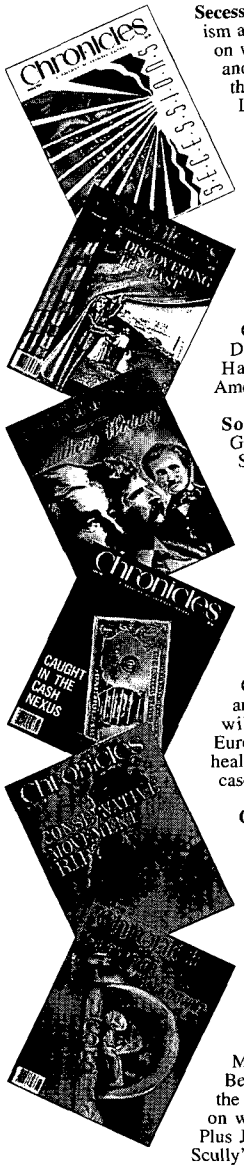
THE YEAR IN REVIEW



Secessions—January 1991—Tomislav Sunic on globalism and the right of self-determination, Bill Kauffman on why Upstate should secede from New York City, and Thomas Fleming on Italy's example of unity through division. Plus Theodore Pappas on Martin Luther King, Jr.'s doctoral dissertation, Allan Brownfeld on Pat Buchanan and his critics, and J.O. Tate on the correspondence of Andrew Lytle, Allen Tate, and Robert Lowell.

Discovering the Past—February 1991—Forrest McDonald on the study of history, M.E. Bradford on the Constitutional Convention, and Charles Causley on the role the past plays in his poetry. Plus George Garrett on John Updike's *Rabbit at Rest*, Fred Chappell on the best and worst of Donald Hall, David Slavitt on the life and work of O.B. Hardison, and Thomas Fleming on modern American verse.

Southern Literature—March 1991—George Garrett on the state of Southern letters, Madison Smartt Bell on the short story, Dabney Stuart on Fred Chappell, Fred Chappell's story "Ancestors," and poems by James Seay and R.H.W. Dillard. Plus Henry Taylor and Kelly Cherry on Southern poetry, George Core on the literary quarterlies, and Steven Goldberg on the teaching of sociology.

Caught in the Cash Nexus—April 1991—Irving Horowitz and Mary Curtis on "bottom-line" thinking and national productivity, Josh Ozersky on the seduction of cable's Nick at Nite, and Thomas Molnar on why European unification will never occur. Plus Samuel Francis on the European New Right, George Carey on the present health of the Constitution, and Frank Bryan on the case for Vermont's secession.

Conservative Movement: R.I.P.?—May 1991—Six views on conservatism by Wick Allison, Charley Reese, Clyde Wilson, Murray N. Rothbard, Howard Phillips, and Donald Devine. Plus Samuel Francis on the failure of American conservatism, Florence King on misanthropy, Chilton Williamson, Jr. on the history of isolationism, and Peter Stanlis's vindication of Edmund Burke.

U.S.S.R.: Crack-up or Crackdown?—June 1991—Andrei Navrozov on Soviet deception and the liberation of Eastern Europe, Yuri Maltsev on the unveiling of Soviet myths, Arnold Beichman on Gorbachev and reform, Jay Kinney on the state of Soviet propaganda, and Thomas Fleming on what America can learn from the Soviet Union. Plus Jeffrey Tucker on enterprise zones, and Matthew Scully's review of Carl Rowan's autobiography.

The Promise of American Life—July 1991—Chilton Williamson, Jr. on the cultural and environmental arguments against increased immigration, Richard Estrada on the impact of immigration on Hispanic-Americans, Thomas Fleming on how Ellis Island has superceded Jamestown and Plymouth Rock, and novelist Edward Redlinski's account of emigrating to America. Plus Milton Rosenberg on Paul de Man and J.O. Tate on the music of Ignaz Friedman.

Penny Dreadfuls—August 1991—Robert Sampson on adventure fiction, Richard S. Wheeler on the clichés of the traditional Western, and Thomas Fleming on the utopian and dystopian visions of science fiction. Plus Llewellyn H. Rockwell on Christopher Lasch's *The True and Only Heaven*, Ellen Wilson Fielding on Elizabeth Fox-Genovese's *Feminism Without Illusions*, and Bill Kauffman on the life and work of Henry W. Clune.

Cultural Amnesia—September 1991—Jacob Neusner on the loss of knowledge and its consequences, George Watson on the role of the literal man, Anthony Harrigan on the importance of dreams and reveries, and Theodore Pappas on the meaning of the New World Order. Plus Frank Brownlow on Dinesh D'Souza's *Illiberal Education*, Jack D. Douglas on the sex studies of Alfred Kinsey, and Lorrin Anderson on the politics of docudrama.

Life on a Small Planet—October 1991—Garrett Hardin on why good fences make good neighbors, Jacqueline Kasun on population control and the environment, and Richard D. Lamm on the role of culture in determining national success. Plus Chilton Williamson, Jr. on the politics of writing histories of Columbus, Thomas Molnar on capitalism and Eastern Europe, and Florence King on Jonathan Agronsky's *Marion Barry*.

Western Writing—November 1991—Chilton Williamson, Jr. on the work of Laura Ingalls Wilder, A. Carl Bredahl on why Western narrative is so American, Stephen Bodio on the life and literature of ranchwomen, and a short story by Kent Nelson. Plus M.E. Bradford on the *Western Writers Series*, Thomas Fleming on traveling in Italy, and John Shelton Reed on the environment and the federal government.

America First: 1941/1991—December 1991—Four views of the America First Committee by Justus D. Doenecke, Wayne S. Cole, Ruth Sarles Benedict, and Leonard P. Liggio. Plus E. Christian Kopff on the Veterans of Future Wars, Thomas Fleming on the lessons of 1941, Samuel Francis on the need for a new America First policy, Theodore Pappas on the Tyler Kent affair, and John B. Thompson on the art of indoctrination.

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movie *Zelig*, and that, I am convinced, is what unhinged her. "Eighty pounds of pepper," the headline read. She'd prided herself on the fact that they'd had to do only two takes. Playing the mother of the psychiatrist who cures Zelig of his chameleon tendencies, Noni played a part for which she was typecast. Her hair marcelled into sticky 1920 waves, she glared out at the camera—an ax murderer crouched in the dock—and answered the interviewer's banal questions with caustic aplomb: "No, we weren't particularly pleased with her. She was what you would call a brat."

"But your husband. He must have been very proud indeed?"

"Not really. He was from a very old Philadelphia family. And, you see, he drank." She was fierce, uncompromising, shocking—and hilarious. There was a vicious honesty about her that appealed; "the most memorable thing in the movie," one critic wrote. She and her friend Mrs. Lloyd Garrison, who portrayed the psychiatrist in old age, were featured in the *New York Times*, and worse yet the article was picked up by the Paris *Herald*, among other papers, and a friend called her from Rome to tell her how great she was. That was all that was needed to topple her sanity. From that day on, she lived in a dream world in which extraordinary, marvelous, and disastrous things happened. "There's been an earthquake in Hancock [our summer place in Maine]. Call Winnie and find out . . ." And there were deeper repercussions on our own views of reality. When, indeed, there was an earthquake in Chappaqua, and my brother-in-law, Phil, called me about it, I thought he was joking.

"How's Woody?" I would say to her sometimes on the phone.

"He never paid me, you know. Three hundred measly dollars. You know what that film earned?" She kept a picture of Woody, the cured, prosperous-looking Zelig, in a silver frame on her living room desk next to a favorite one of my father—smiling, youthful, glancing up from the deck of a sailboat. Anyone looking at the overcoated, distinguished-looking gentleman in the fedora, caught for a moment in the bustle of Madison Avenue sidewalk traffic sometime in the 30's, would have taken it as a picture of her father, or perhaps an uncle. The man grinning up at her from the ship's deck could have been a son or former lover.

"Go right out and buy some dental floss," she commanded one night. When I asked if it couldn't wait until morning, she informed me gaily that she'd just been paid "mints" for doing a dental floss commercial. "Me and me wooden teeth," she laughed. Speaking in the brogue was always a positive sign. I hadn't heard her in such a good mood in weeks. The truth was that she'd sat in a waiting room, and then filled out a form—she and some fifty other old ladies. Nothing had ever come of it, except in her mind. She went through a brief stage in which she possessed vast wealth, and we had to curtail her check-writing ability. We needn't have worried that this would upset her, for she continued to write checks in her mind—dispensing largess, dispelling gloom. We all drew closer to her now. Still physically active, she became younger, more entertaining, almost overflowing with girlish charm.

"Did I ever tell you about my affair with Fred Astaire?" she remarked one day to Sandra, who had gotten her the *Zelig* job. Her eyesight going, she would sit in her apartment, alone for hours, playing his records, imagining herself in his arms.

"Utter nonsense," I assured Sandra. "All in her mind." But when I happened to mention it to "Aunt" Zorka, one of my mother's oldest, childhood friends, she beamed.

"Oh, yes," she said. "We were *both* in love with *him*." It turned out that Fred Astaire had spun them around a dance floor at a Brooklyn cotillion when they, and the century, were roughly 18. They had arranged the party—which included an exhibition by Fred Astaire and his sister—and in return, he had danced each one around the room. That was all there was to it. But that was enough to alter both their lives.

One day her maid came in to find Noni lying on the floor entangled in the phonograph wires. Unharmed, she looked up with a bad-girl-caught-in-the-act smile. She had been dancing with Fred Astaire, she explained, and had tripped and fallen. After that we dared not leave her alone.

In the fall of 1985 she was in the hospital with a brain tumor. Dr. Goodrich informed us that nothing could be done. She wasn't in any pain but couldn't move around very well, and the radiation treatments made her weak. She hated the hospital, as she hated the fact that she couldn't stay awake, couldn't talk, not for long, couldn't read, couldn't even watch television. What she did when we came to visit her was play Pat-a-cake and arm wrestle. The muscles of her upper arm were amazingly strong. But she had to be forced up out of bed to walk.

Home from the hospital, in bed most of the time now, she began to sing. "I hear those angel voices singing," she warbled as I came into her room one day, and I thought, "Good. She has made her peace with God." I looked over at Bea, her loving, long-suffering, Jamaican nurse for the past half year, and smiled.

"She sing dat piece all the time," Bea said, "and dat pop tune, what's its name?" Then I heard the rest of the words, "old, black Joe," and I sat down next to her on the bed and took her hand. Fooled again, I thought, picking up the song, "I hear those angel voices singing old, black Joe." Her treble to my bass. We sang the spiritual through together two more times.

My sister had cautioned me not to react to her loss of hair but hadn't prepared me for the softness its absence gave her features. Her hair had been white and leonine and now what was left of it was soft and silky and flattened to her head like a baby's. And, like a baby, she seemed defenseless and sweet. She opened her eyes and looked up at me, as if reading my thoughts. And then they narrowed in the old way, and she pointed her finger accusingly, "Bald as you. Bald as you now!"

"Bald as a baby," I replied and cupped my hand around her head in astonishment and love. She shut her eyes. "You must have been a beautiful baby, you must have been a beautiful child," she sang, quick as that. I could almost see her dancing.

It was only a few weeks later that she died.

Clinton W. Trowbridge writes from Sedgwick, Maine.

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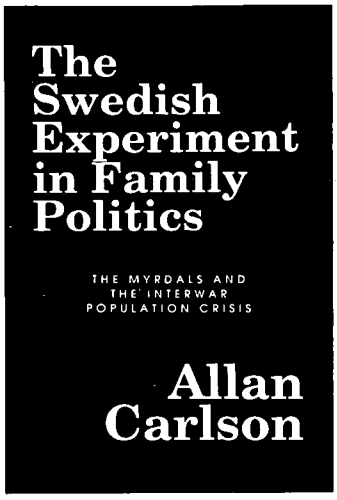
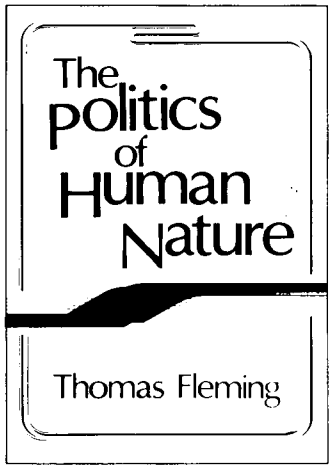
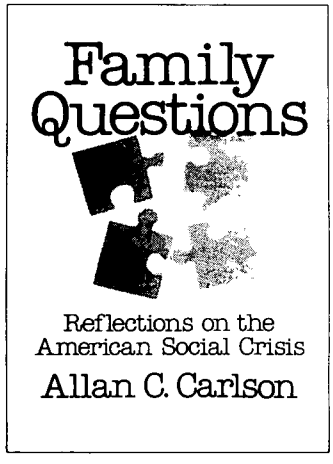
transaction

New and Recent Books on Family and Policy







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